



**Mahatma  
Gandhi**

**Moulana  
Abul Kalam  
Azad**

**Acharya  
Kripalani**

# THE GANDHIAN WAY

By

Acharya J. B. KRIPALANI

*(General Secretary, Indian National Congress)*

*Third Revised Edition*



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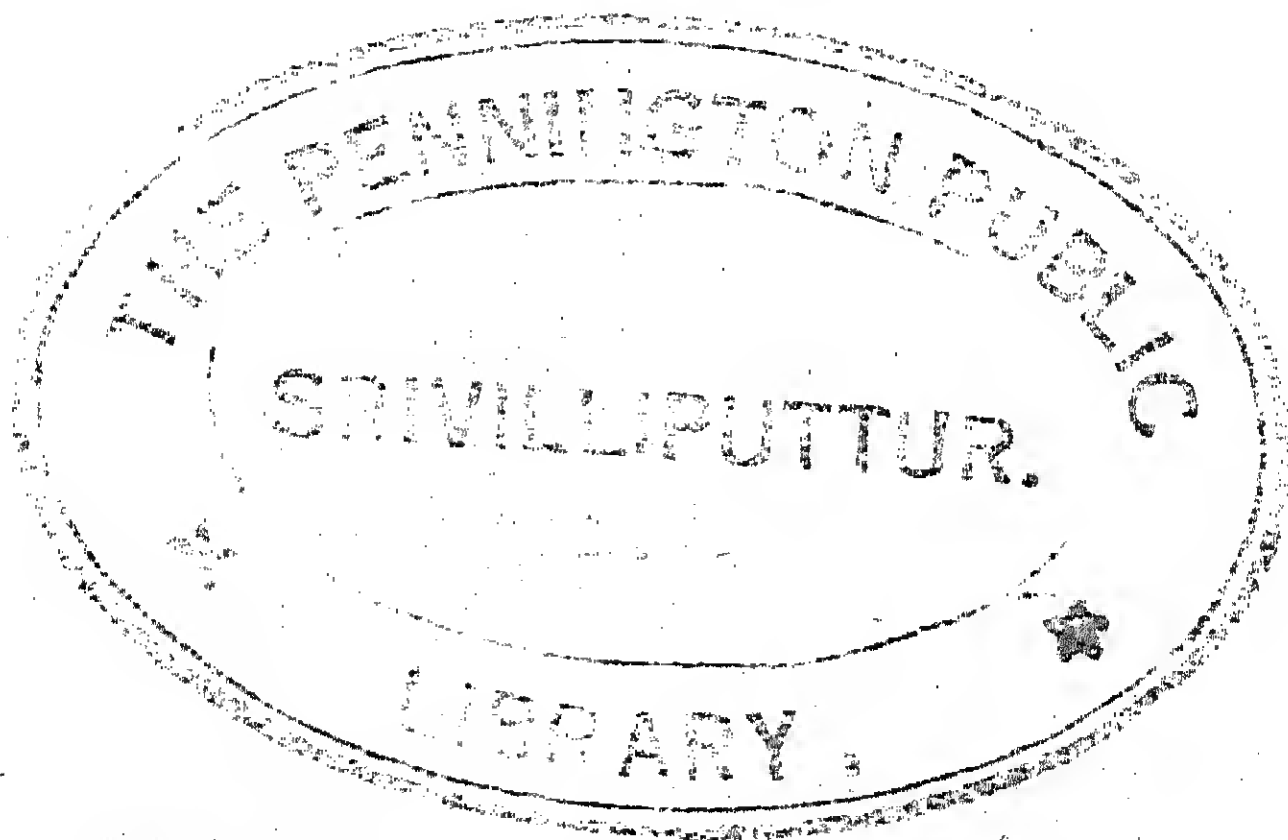


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## FOREWORD\*

There is something in Acharya Kripalani's way of thinking and writing which distinguishes it from others', and those who know him can tell at once that a particular thing is from his pen. This is the impression that the present collection has left on my mind.

The collection is likely to be of considerable help to the student in making his choice from the various ideologies that are at present being made current in the country. Acharya Kripalani has, I think, succeeded in demonstrating that the programme adopted by the Congress in 1920 is as necessary for securing Freedom as it was in 1920.

He is right in his statement that there is no such thing as "Gandhism". Insistence on Truth is an eternal principle. The jewel of Non-violence was discovered during the search for and contemplation of Truth, and the programme of 1920 is part of the practice of *Ahimsa*. To expect Freedom without this is to plough the sands.

M. K. GANDHI

\* Being a translation of Gandhiji's Foreword to the Gujarati Edition of this book.



## NOTE

The first two editions of this book contained some articles on current political events and the writer's views and opinions thereon. These articles had nothing to do with Gandhiji's ideas and ideals. The name of the volume "The Gandhian Way" was not therefore to that extent justified. From the present, the third edition of the book, all such matter, as had no reference to Gandhiji's philosophy and technique, has been eliminated. This, it is hoped, will give the book unity of thought and purpose.

The size of the volume remains the same. It has been maintained by the incorporation of a pamphlet on "Non-violent Revolution" written long ago. This addition gives a historical background and a justification to "The Gandhian Way".

Swaraj Bhawan,  
ALLAHABAD,  
26th November 1945.

J. B. KRIPALANI

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*PART I*

THE SPINNING WHEEL



# KHADI AND INDUSTRIALISATION

( *Gandhi Jayanti*, 1934 )

THE most favourite, also as they think, the most formidable, argument, which the educated and more specially the socialists bring against Charkha and Khadi, is that they arrest and turn back the hands of the clock of modern progress. Impressed by the prosperity of the West, they have come to think that only the industrialisation of the country would solve the problem of Indian poverty. Evidently these friends had no occasion to study the history of Modern Western Industrialisation critically. If they had, they would not be so dogmatic. Everywhere and at every step of industrialisation, whether in the West or in the East, the powerful arm of a national oligarchical government was at the back of the industrialists. Not only this, but in most of the countries such oligarchical national governments were actually run by either the industrialists and financiers themselves directly, or indirectly by their paid puppets. This is so even to-day. The main point of attack of the socialists against modern governments is that they are directly or indirectly run by big business in the interests of capital. There is no other way known to history than oligarchical concentration of power for the industrialisation of an agricultural

country. The recent experiment in Russia only proves this point. Here, a powerful oligarchy taking possession of all power and all the resources of the land has industrialised the country and, in some cases, even against its wishes. This industrialisation has not been effected as in the capitalist countries in the interests of a small section of the population, the capitalists, but in the interests of the proletariat. The methods employed, however, are the same—the concentration of all political and economic power in the hands of a well-knit, compact oligarchy that knows its own mind and what is it about. India has an oligarchical form of government, but the oligarchy being a foreign one, rules not in the interests of industrialists and financiers of this country but of England. If the present bureaucracy could be replaced by a coloured oligarchy, it might be possible for the latter to effect something in this direction, provided it could get the necessary capital and the technical skill from outside. Both these it will not have except by some very substantial concessions to the foreigners, which would greatly impair India's sovereignty for a considerable time to come.

The second factor in modern industrialisation has been the foreign markets. These foreign markets consist of so-called backward countries supplying raw material and serving as markets for the finished products. As the field for this economic exploitation of backward races has been narrowing for reasons now universally known, industry in Europe and America and in parts of Asia has been experiencing ever-increasing difficulties. These difficulties in the past led to the Great War and may lead, unless timely and heroic measures are adopted, to more widespread and devastating world wars in the future. After a couple of such wars, there will be no country left, on this

planet of ours, 'civilised' enough to wish for industrialisation in the future.

But even in the industrialised countries, has the problem of poverty of the masses been solved? At one time it seemed near solution in some favoured countries, when the industrialisation of other countries in the West and the East upset the whole arrangement. Today there is no industrial capitalist country that does not suffer from unemployment which threatens to be pretty permanent and chronic. The blame for this state of affairs is thrown upon the anarchic condition of production and distribution of wealth under capitalist regime. It is expected that the remedy would come from planned national economy. This may be possible in some big countries more or less self-sufficient in respect of raw materials and having extensive internal markets, countries like Russia, U. S. A., and others. So far as smaller countries like England, and those on the continent, and Japan are concerned it would be impossible to do anything by planned economy, if their imperial markets disappeared. Even when they are able to do something they will have considerably to lower their present standard of living, not for any one class but for all classes. Under favourable circumstances, however, a planned economy for free India, though difficult, is within the range of possibility. Only it would require a two-fold revolution, one that would get us national independence, and the other that would give us a planned economy, whether of the Fascist or of the Bolshevic type. Till these revolutions are accomplished, it would be idle to talk of the industrialisation of the country even if it were desirable.

Recently in some local Councils there was talk of planned economy for something or other. Such talk





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betrays gross ignorance, for which the only excuse is that such ideas emanate from legislators, not a clever community the world over, but here in India having more than their share of ignorance, being attached to Councils that lack reality and seriousness. There can be no planned economy for production only, nor can there be any planned economy in one or two industries. The unit for planned economy must be a country at least. It must embrace both production and distribution. Without this there can be no planned economy in any scientific sense of the term.

The history of recent developments in Indian industry shows the possibilities and limitations of the industrialisation of India situated as she is today. The cotton industry is ever at the door of the Government for protection in addition to the huge protection it receives from the Swadeshi movement. The Government protection is granted on the implied understanding that the industry will behave itself, that is, support the Government in their schemes. The schemes of the Government are first to help Lancashire, their masters, and then for imperial reasons not to annoy Japan. In all the arrangements that they make in these two directions, the Indian cotton interest must support the Government. The Ottawa Pact and the two agreements with Lancashire and Japan fully bear this out. More has been lost by these pacts and agreements than what the cloth industry has gained from protection. It is threatened with extinction as much today as before. Even this doubtful protection was purchased by siding with the Government as against the Congress, their best friend in the long run, if the mill agents had only the brains to understand. The history of other Indian industries reveals a similar



tale of woe. Some industries built up during the war with the patronage of the Government saw this patronage gone as soon as the war was over. It was thought that they interfered with the British market. It is a notorious fact that the whole commercial, industrial and financial policy of the Government of India is mainly directed by big business in England. This is quite natural. The English came to India for no philanthropic purpose. To expect them to help Indian industry at the expense of British industry, or at the expense of their imperialist policy, is to delude oneself.

Some industrialisation in India, supported and unsupported by the Government, but always supported by the people, has been in existence now nearly for the last forty years. Let us examine the results:—

The population dependent upon agriculture in

1891 was 61 per cent	1911 was 71 per cent
1901 „ 66 „	1921 „ 72.8 „

The figures for 1931 are not specifically given in the census report. But it is not difficult to deduce them from the facts given there. They come to about 73% (Census Reports).

These figures are illuminating. They show a progressive pressure on the land. They only prove that under the present regime India will have to wait till the Greek Calends to effect any degree of industrialisation.

Apart from this, would it not be more appropriate for the advocates of industrialisation to save the already dwindling industries than to talk of further industrialisation? As the facts stand today, nothing in the direction of industrialisation, that would count, can be done except

by a national government. The question then naturally arises, are we to wait till the advent of a national government to help the starving millions of our countrymen? If we have to industrialise before we can alleviate the poverty of the masses, we will have to wait whether we like it or not.

Yet, to do nothing in the meantime to mitigate the hardships and horrors of this grinding poverty would be callous indeed. The work for Swaraj can effectively be done only by those who have already begun to feel keenly about the poverty of the masses. They would not be true to their faith if, while working for Swaraj, they did not devise means for the amelioration of the condition of their countrymen to however small an extent. Nay, such work itself would be work for Swaraj. This work of amelioration under the present circumstances can best be done by Charkha and Khadi. It also gives the necessary contact with, and influence over, the masses without whose active help or at least passive approval no national revolution can be possible.

In this discussion I have scrupulously avoided the views and personality of Gandhiji. This I have done because the opponents of the Charkha always bring his views about machinery, western civilization, *sanyam* and religion to confound the plain issue. Lest this be done, I have kept his views and personality outside the discussion, which I want to be entirely historical, economic and scientific.

## II

# SOCIALISM AND KHADI

( *Gandhi Jayanti*, 1934 )

SOCIALISM is in the air. Everywhere in the land are springing up socialist leagues and societies. This is so not only in India but the world over. Socialism seems to be the idea of the times. It has attracted to itself many of the best minds of the world. Even its opponents Fascism and Nazism clothe themselves in the garb of Socialism and use its phraseology and catchwords. Every new group reform and group movement has, therefore, to justify its existence in terms of the aims of Socialism. Let us see if Khadi can so justify itself. It is also necessary that there be no conflict between two movements claiming the same objective, the raising of the masses of humanity.

For a scientific and systematic discussion of the problem it is necessary that we form a clear idea of what Socialism stands for. If we propose to import no prepossession or prejudice in the investigation, we must readily admit that religion, sex-morality, the family, the forms of the State, industrialisation and several other things with which Socialism is associated in half-educated and un-critical minds are not of the essence of Socialism. The essence of Socialism consists in its theory (right or wrong) of 'Surplus Value'. It is through this 'Surplus Value' that the exploitation of the masses is carried on. This 'Surplus Value' takes the form of



profit, rent and interest. An industry or commerce that leaves no 'Surplus Value', that is, has no room for profit, rent or interest, must be considered socialistic. It does not matter for scientific purposes whether the initiators and advocates of such commerce and industry believe in God or are materialistic; it does not matter whether they believe in one set of sex-rules or the other; whether they believe in industrialisation or not; they have the essence of Socialism in them.

Now the Khadi industry leaves no room for 'Surplus Value', no room either for rent, interest or profit. All the profits go to pay the services. Nothing is distributed to any other party performing any real or imaginary services. The services are paid on very nearly equal basis. Some figures will make the point clear. The average earnings of a weaver are about Rs. 13 to Rs. 15, of a dhobi about Rs. 12 to Rs. 15, of a painter Rs. 25 to Rs. 30, and of a carpenter Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 per month. The earnings of a spinner are less, but spinning is only a part time, leisure occupation. As against this the average allowance paid to the organisers of this activity, some of them highly educated, is Rs. 20 per month (Gandhi Ashram—U.P.—figures).

As a corollary from the theory of 'Surplus Value', Socialism has insisted upon the socialisation of the instruments of production. So far as Khadi is concerned the instruments of production are the Charkha and the Loom. These need not be socialised as their cost is such that the average villager can afford it. Where the villager cannot afford to furnish himself with these primitive and simple machines but is willing to work, the Spinners' Association, a public body, comes to his help. So, in

fact, these crude instruments of production are as good as nationalised.

The other powerful instrument of production is capital. This is nationalised, being in the hands of the Spinners' Association. It is public property earning neither rent nor interest nor profit. The few private producers in the field have also to regulate themselves by the standards set by the Spinners' Association. They must be certified. Their accounts and prices are subject to inspection and check. They have in addition to face the Spinners' Association's competition. They therefore have to satisfy themselves with profits that cover only their wages on a very moderate scale. In fact, the whole of the Khadi industry is a socialistic experiment and a socialistic venture. I have no doubt that if the present foreign government were replaced by an indigenous one, Khadi would be a national industry run by the national government in the interests of the proletariat.

The logic of Socialism is based upon the study of objective facts. However much an Indian Socialist may substitute for this the study of the Socialist and Bolshevic literature pouring in from the West in ever increasing quantities and swallowed with an ever increasing avidity it cannot be gainsaid that socialistic theories claim to be based upon a study of hard 'objective facts.' They are Realistic. This is the claim of all Scientific Socialism. The movement of Khadi more than any other movement is based upon no preconceived ideas, no orthodoxies ancient or modern, religious or scientific. It is based upon the study of objective facts as they exist and manifest themselves in 700,000 villages throughout India.

Socialism among other things believes in Revolution. The Charkha, in addition to its incessant revolutions which those who run may see, is responsible for other and more philosophical Revolutions. In vulgar minds a revolution is identified or confused with popular upheavals of a more or less violent type, but the essence of a revolution lies in the re-valuation of values. From this point of view, no other movement in modern India has produced a more thoroughgoing transvaluation of values,—this not only in the sartorial sphere but in many other spheres. It has made the respectable, disrespectable, and *vice-versa*; the beautiful, ugly, and the ugly beautiful. Ideas of decency, art, necessity and hygiene have all changed with the advent of Khadi. The Charkha has not only affected the economics of the masses but also of the classes. Khadi stands for a particular mentality and a particular philosophy. We may agree with that philosophy or not, but there it stands transvaluing values and producing a stupendous revolution which only rank prejudice can afford to belittle or ignore. Such belittling and ignoring would ill square with a socialistic, scientific and realistic attitude of mind.

### III

## FALLACIES ABOUT KHADI

(*Gandhi Jayanti*, 1934)

WHEN the spinning wheel is placed before the villager, he has no argument against it, not because he is unable to argue, but because he instinctively feels that the wheel will increase his productive capacity, and will be to that

extent a source of income. His difficulty is not that he is not convinced about the Charkha's utility and desirability in his home, and in every village home, but that he is no more used to it. It is not done these days! His whole life is guided by custom. The uncustomary! how can it be done?

Not so with the learned. If they can be convinced about the soundness of Khadi as an economic proposition, they may have no further objection. This is what they feel, though custom rules their lives only a little less than the villagers'. While the villager cannot give a philosophical justification for his customs and narrow self-interest, the city man with his stores of learning can do this with seeming effect. He never does a thing without advancing some idealistic or scientific justification! Very often the learned explanations he advances, when critically examined, turn out to be half understood and partially digested knowledge, a kind of learned ignorance. We here propose to deal with some of the objections raised by the learned against Khadi.

The first objection is that Khadi is not an economic proposition. Evidently the objectors are here confusing economics with personal and household economy. In the language of the learned this would be the fallacy of the *undistributed middle*, or four terms. That is, they are using the same middle term but with a different connotation. They of course do not detect the fallacy in their reasoning. What they mean by the proposition is that a yard of Khadi is dearer than a yard of the same sort of foreign or Indian mill cloth. But this proposition has nothing to do with the science of economics. It may be true and yet the science of economics may accept it as a good economic policy for a nation. The fact is that



economics is the science of the wealth of nations. It was sometimes called political economy. Adam Smith styled his book on economics as "The Wealth of Nations". Some of the classical economists did think that universal stage of the science of economics was at hand when there would be no question of the wealth of nations as separate entities but the wealth of the world; that in the field of economic activity, in the production, consumption, distribution and exchange of wealth, the whole of humanity would act as one unit, the different nations being as the different divisions of a nation today; that there would be no national barriers, no tariff walls, no dumping, and that wealth would flow from one country to another without let or hindrance. This happy dream has not been realised. Today it is more distant than ever. The science of economics deals with the objective facts as they are today, not as they might be in the future in some real or utopian world.

Let us then examine Khadi from the point of view of the Indian nation, situated as it is today. Does the production of Khadi add to the national wealth? There is no doubt that it does create some wealth. Is this done at the expense of the time and the energy with which greater units of wealth could be produced? The whole argument for Khadi is based upon the undeniable fact of the leisure of the peasantry, which when it is least, is about three months in the year. Compulsory leisure in economic language is unemployment. So when Khadi is produced it means that this leisure is fruitfully employed in the creation of extra National Wealth. It is taking away, howsoever small a bit, of national unemployment. The elimination of unemployment from a nation's life is a sound proposition in Economics.

There is increased production. Some economists think that the standard of living in India cannot possibly rise unless there is increased production per unit of population. Khadi increases this production. It does this at the expense of no other greater production of wealth. It has not stopped the Indian mills. That is not its objective. For many years to come all mills that are working and many more, and all the Khadi that is produced today and much more will be necessary to clothe the nation on the very meagre basis of today.

Khadi also increases the purchasing power of the nation. Purchasing power is a recognised measure for assessing national wealth. The villager spends less on cloth when he plies the Charkha than when he does not. This means he has some surplus wealth which he can profitably use to better his standard of living. The rich, when they purchase Khadi, may have to spend more, but it is not their standard of living that needs raising. As a matter of fact, even the rich, when they have taken to Khadi, have saved many a rupee. At this stage it is not necessary to discuss how this saving is effected.

Khadi also stops wealth from going out to the extent it displaces foreign cloth. This again means that there is a greater reservoir of national wealth from which individuals can draw and future production can grow. So that Khadi enriches, even when it seems to take away something from the pocket of the purchaser. What he loses in one form, he more than gains in another.

From the point of view, then, of (1) the diminution of unemployment, (2) increase in national production, (3) the purchasing power of the poor and (4) the collective wealth of the nation, Charkha and Khadi are sound propositions in Economics.

## IV

# KHADI AND LIVING WAGE

( *Gandhi Jayanti*, 1934 )

OBJECTION is again raised that Khadi does not pay a living economic wage to the worker. What is a living economic wage ? It has no fixed connotation. As a matter of fact, for the wage-earning population in general, there can be no living economic wage in a country where there is any great and chronic unemployment. There can only be customary wages changing after long intervals. These, in some well entrenched and powerfully organised trades and industries, may come up to the standard of economic living wage. But economic living wage for labour in general does not exist today in any modern country except perhaps in Russia ; and the wages in Russia will not be considered economic elsewhere. Russia tolerates them today, only in the pursuit of an ideal. The so-called economic living wage, in some trades and industries, is really at the expense of the unemployed.

But the objector may ask, does Khadi provide even customary wages for the kind of labour it employs ? Here are some figures. The weaver gets from Rs. 13 to Rs. 15 p.m., the washerman from Rs. 12 to Rs. 15, the carpenter from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30, and the printer from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30. (Figures according to Gandhi Ashram, Meerut.) Those who know will admit that these are customary wages for the skilled labour mentioned here.

Spinning is a part time and leisure occupation. However, if a spinner works for 8 hours, he would earn from 6 to 8 pice per day. The higher figure is in fact the customary wage paid to unskilled labour in the villages in many provinces. In some provinces higher wages are paid, but everywhere the conditions of labour are hard, and its demand is not steady throughout the year, but only seasonal. A steady income of two annas per day will satisfy rural labour in all provinces except perhaps in portions of Gujarat, Sindh and the Punjab. The objection about wages is, therefore, bound to disappear with the study of facts in rural India.

But what about the city? Whether in the city or in the village, nobody has ever advised those who are engaged in any kind of remunerative labour to substitute for the Charkha. The whole economics of the Charkha is based upon the idea that it is the most suitable supplementary industry for the agriculturist. Nobody wants the Charkha to be a substitute for any kind of more remunerative occupation. That the Charkha in the village apart from its supplementary character offers very nearly the customary wage for unskilled labour, must be considered an additional merit to its credit.

*Note :—*Since this was written Gandhiji has introduced his new scheme by which the spinner gets three annas for 8 hours' labour at the Charkha. But who can say that this is an economic living wage? All that can be said about it is, that it gives the minimum of food and clothing to an individual. If this is what is meant by the term economic living wage, it is there now, after the introduction of the new scheme in 1935.



## SWADESHI AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

LARGE scale factory production has everywhere made the machine the master of man. By concentrating wealth in the hands of an ever-narrowing group it has created classes at war with each other, keeping society in perpetual, unstable equilibrium, leading to revolution and counter-revolution. The social and moral evils of the factory are too well-known to need mention here. But all this could be regulated if power were in the hands of the wise and the good who worked in public interest as distinguished from that of the owners of the machines. It is quite possible that a wise government either by or for the masses, may so order production of wealth as to eliminate inequalities; and with the disappearance of inequalities the social and moral evils associated with large scale machine production may cease to be. Humanity under such circumstances where production and distribution are ordered not for private but for public good and advantage, may enjoy all the benefits of science without its evils. It may make the machine its slave and not its master. But before such a wise authority is established or created, it is idle to hope that the present ills that humanity suffers from, can to any appreciable extent be eliminated.

Experience has proved that factory and social legislation of howsoever radical a nature, has been unable to remove the inequalities created by the capitalist order. These remain, creating jealousy, discontent,

hatred, strife and war between the "haves" and the "have-nots". Science if it is to regulate economic life for the advantage and the advancement of humanity, must regulate not only production and a minor part of it, but also consumption, distribution and exchange of wealth. To-day in capitalist society all that science is allowed to do is to increase production not only of useful but even of useless, nay, of harmful commodities. Science having created the machines and technique, has stopped there. The machines have come to be owned by fair or foul means, more by the latter, by an ever narrowing number. If humanity is to take advantage of science, it must allow it to regulate the production of useful commodities, in quantities needed by society eliminating the useless and the harmful, in the interest not only of the present generation but also of the future generations. Science must regulate the distribution, exchange and consumption of all wealth which it has helped to create. To-day if physical sciences have made the control of nature possible, social sciences have made it quite possible to introduce a scientifically planned economy. So if the votaries of science advocate its use in some department,—the factory, to be consistent, they have to proceed further and bring the whole of the economic and social life under the rule of science. The partial use of science produces to-day utter confusion and chaos in the economical, and therefore in the social and political, life of humanity.

Before the advent of the machine and the factory, the economic life of an agricultural civilization, with its cottage industries, was more equitably regulated than now under the capitalist system. The question, therefore, arises whether it is desirable to introduce greater confusion in countries that are more or less governed by

the old economy. The old order is regulated by custom and protected from gross abuse by moral and social sanctions which the most powerful find difficult to disregard.

Apart, therefore, from any preconceived theories for or against the machine and the mechanic age, a practical reformer would seriously ask himself whether it would be worth his while to introduce a more chaotic economic life than already exists with its resultant inequalities, dirt, squalour, physical and moral disease, jealousy, hatred, and war between classes; and then having introduced these, to await a bloody and sanguinary revolution to readjust the scales? Would it not be preferable to live and struggle under the present regime, bad as it is, till a more ordered, scientific and planned economy became possible; and in the meanwhile, to utilise all opportunities to put more life and energy in the old order to make it better and more serviceable? It is quite possible for the reformer to hold such views. This is what lies among other things at the root of the present efforts to revive cottage and village industries. It is for those who advocate the cause of science and mechanisation to show that they have not only the necessary ability and will but also the power to make science regulate all the departments of the economic and social life.

So far as India is concerned, we have not even the little power that other free nations possess under a capitalist regime for labour and social legislation, to protect our masses from the extremest kind of exploitation. A conservative and admittedly a non-revolutionary trade union as the one at Ahmedabad, guided by Gandhiji's spirit of compromise, is unable to protect the very moderate and reasonable rights of labour. Guided

by a policy of ruthless and shortsighted selfishness, the mill-agents have always been busy in recent years to effect huge wage cuts—and this, inspite of the fact that mills in Ahmedabad have been reaping a good harvest of profits and the number of mills is increasing every year. The wage cuts are resorted to inspite of the help and the protection that the mills have been getting from the Swadeshi movement by which the Indian consumer ungrudgingly pays more than he would pay for similar goods from Lancashire or Japan, inspite of the fact that whatever protection was demanded of government was always backed up by public opinion, inspite too of the fact that the mills have ever refused to put their own house in order, and the agencies have been unwilling to make any cuts in their fat and unreasonable agency charges. Public workers have been acting as the unpaid agents and canvassers for the mills. They have advertised for them, and at great public expense, organised exhibitions for their benefit. The profits of all this have been silently swallowed up by the few capitalists. They have broken pledges solemnly given to the Congress. Ever since the Swadeshi and boycott-spirit took possession of the nation, the mill interests have played a mean, unpatriotic and suicidal game. They so raised the prices in the days of the partition agitation that they brought about the literal collapse of the Swadeshi movement of the times. Since 1921, they have increased the production of the lower counts of cloth coming in direct competition with the movement that supported them, the movement of Khadi; for all those who could not take to Khadi, invariably excused themselves with the plea of Swadeshi. Some of the mills went further and styled their production of lower counts as Khadi. Since 1932 there has



been an open betrayal of the national cause. Public workers know the haughtiness with which mill agents repudiated their agreements with the Congress, made in happier times. In various other ways they showed that they preferred narrow, short-sighted selfishness to the national cause which, in the end, would be their best protection, if they had only the eyes to see and the brains to understand. Their spokesman in the Assembly not only supported repression but even called for the suppression of the Congress. By their help to the Ottawa Agreement and the pacts with Japan and Lancashire they have completely demonstrated their unfitness to be the guardians of their own interests much less of the national interests. I have taken as an illustration the cloth industry. The sugar and other industries reveal the same tale of woeful disregard of public good in favour of inordinate immediate greed.

When such is our helplessness that we cannot even enforce agreements, when we cannot protect labour, when we cannot protect the consumer, and when we, in short, cannot reap where we have sown, it is idle to talk of helping and encouraging large scale machine production. We have tried it with all earnestness and patriotism at our command. We have protected large industry from foreign competition, we have tried to protect it from the foreign government, we have sought to protect it from revolutionary socialism and communism, yet we have received nothing in return except gross ingratitude and betrayal. If industry has done this, commerce has done no better. The wholesale and the retail merchants have often passed on foreign goods as genuine Swadeshi.

In the face of all this those who would ask us to

advocate and protect machine-made goods in the name of science and modernism would indeed be asking us to commit political and economic suicide. For these friends it would be more reasonable and fruitful first to capture power and arm themselves with sanctions that will protect the masses, the cultivator, the labourer and the consumer. Let them develop power to enable them to punish, and if need be, to eliminate all those who stand in the way of national goods as measured by the masses, our helpless half-starved countrymen. Let them get this power first and then advocate machine production, or else they are greater and more dangerous theorists and more bigoted fanatics in the name of science than Gandhi is in the name of his many fads. He at least sees to the interests of the masses as distinguished from the interests of the capitalists. He wanted their co-operation but they would have none of it, or of him. Blinded by cupidity and selfishness they refused the hand of fellowship in a common cause. They have chosen to kick the ladder upon which they have climbed to their present heights. I am conscious of honourable exceptions but they have been few and far between. I am prepared to recognise that in the absence of effective sanctions all this would have happened any where else. But that only proves that it is no use for the middle and poor classes to help in their own exploitation and slavery. It is no use for those who are poor to add to the riches of the rich. It is no use adding car to car, bungalow to bungalow. Let it not be said that those who have much, much is added to them, and those who have little even that little is taken away from them. Let us without co-operating in the game of the rich capitalist, yet keep to Swadeshi which must be the life blood of the nation.

Let, therefore, all thoughtful and vigilant patriotism that really cares for the good of the masses help the cause, good and true, of cottage industries, till power is captured and all production, exchange, distribution and consumption of economic wealth is ordered for one and only one legitimate and moral purpose, namely, the greatest good of the greatest numbers.

*April, 1935.*

## VI

# CONSTRUCTIVE WORK AND REVOLUTION

*(September, 1934.)*

"THE Charkha, village industry and generally the constructive programme of the Congress, partially ameliorate the condition of the people. The real remedy for the poverty, the degradation and the slavery of the masses can come only from a revolution. Whatever partial measures are adopted to better their lot, serve only as an opiate, lulling them into forgetfulness of the real problem, the problem of the revolution. Reform keeps them more or less content. It takes away the edge of discontent. It reconciles them to their chains. It makes them forget the essential class antagonism and the fundamental conflict of class interest embedded in the very nature of things. No revolution in the past could be effected until the

conditions had become the worst imaginable, absolutely unbearable. The more grossly unjust they were, the more thorough was the retribution and the consequent readjustment. No reformatory effort therefore should be made merely to better the lot of any class low down in the scale of humanity. If such a conscious, studied and scientific attitude results in any extra poverty, degradation, nay even considerable loss of life, that must be accepted with philosophic and scientific equanimity, and must be considered as the necessary price to be paid to a cruel, inexorable nature of things. Such suffering is like the surgeon's knife, the throes of a new birth. It is only when humanity has drunk the cup of degradation and misery to the last dregs, that it can burst forth and break its bonds." So runs the argument of a section of socialists and the communists.

Now it is quite possible that in the body social, circumstance may arise when nothing short of a revolution, nothing short of an entire readjustment of conditions and values could save society from a catastrophe. Things may be so fundamentally rotten, that no tinkering with the problem would have any durable effect. The situation may need a wholesale change of standards and values. The old order may be so hopelessly out of tune with the spirit of the times, and may be in such a process of degradation, decay and putrefaction from day to day, that the smooth, easy, sane, reasonable and evolutionary process may be unable to overtake the rot, that reform may lag behind and that every day society finds itself on the downward path. It is at such times that the cruel knife of the surgeon, what in society goes by the name of revolution, may be necessary.

While all this may be admitted, it may be doubted



whether revolutions always arise from and are born of adverse circumstances that have reached the rock bottom, when there can be no further going down. The history of revolutions shows no such inevitableness. In many instances, the external circumstances were favourable for a revolution and yet for want of something or other, the revolution never came. There are other cases, where the revolution did not wait for circumstances to get to the very worst, but some spirited individuals or proud groups forged ahead and brought it about. There are still other cases, when as the circumstances were improving, the revolution came on partly as a result of these very improvements. Nothing could be worse in external circumstances than the life of the slaves in the ancient world. They were a numerous class numbering many times their masters. Yet no revolution came. In modern times the emancipation of the Negro in America was not the result of any Negro agitation or effort, though it is difficult to picture to oneself worse conditions for human souls and bodies. The condition of the plebians in ancient Rome was not as bad as that of the slaves, yet they produced a revolution in the state. In mediaeval Europe the condition of the masses was much worse than the condition of the present day European proletariat and yet all they produced were a few peasant risings put down in blood. The bourgeois revolution against the kings and landlords in the modern states, was not brought about by people whose economic condition was bad, but rather by people who were in comfortable circumstances and at a time when their condition was becoming progressively comfortable and their liberties increasing with their affluence. The American revolution was not to drive away the demon of poverty but to assert their rights,

which, they thought, was one of their natural rights, over their own political and economic destiny. The French revolution which may be considered to be in point, as proving the doctrine enunciated by a section of our socialist friends, also lends them no support. The condition of the peasantry and the lower middle class was, as a matter of fact, improving. The revolution was not so much the result of misery that was unbearable, as that people were no more prepared to bear what they bore in patience before. There was a wide gulf between the ideas of people about what they considered as their natural rights such as liberty and equality, and the external physical conditions under which they lived. These abstract ideas, not altogether correct or logical, were preached by philosophers some of whom had very little to do with the practical affairs of their times. Yet what is this French revolution? Historians have not hesitated to call it 'a unique episode.' The recent Russian revolution is the only one, that had as one of its causes the economic condition of the masses, which was the very worst imaginable. But that condition was more due to the exhaustion of the war and disappearance of authority. Before the war, the condition of the peasantry owing to the emancipation of serfs was certainly better than when the Russian peasant was a mere serf and there was no industrial life in the country. Again, the general economic condition in all the countries in Central Europe was at the time very much the same. Germany, Austria, Hungary, were all in the same economic plight as Russia, if not worse, and yet no revolution resulted from their misery. The countries in central Europe even to-day are in the same hopeless economic plight, yet no revolution seems to be in sight. A critical student of the

recent Russian revolution, will not fail to find the great part played by *chance* in its success. At many a critical juncture, if one bit had gone wrong, the whole thing would have miscarried. Sometimes it was even because the schemes of its protagonists miscarried, that success was achieved.

I have taken examples of revolutions from the West, for only western history is supposed by the modern mind to show the historical evolutionary process. The Asiatic history is a series of ups and downs, where it is difficult to mark the direction towards which the current of events is forging ahead. There are periods of advance and brilliance, and then there are long periods of silent decay and disintegration. Yet it would not be out of place to take a few instances of Asiatic revolutions recorded in History. Most of them appear to be bound up with the lives of individual geniuses, religious or political. Nothing could be more stupendously revolutionary in all departments of life than Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Yet take away the birth of the geniuses and for centuries society in India, Palestine, Arabia and elsewhere might have gone on without a ruffle. Then there were political geniuses like Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Constantine, Akbar, Shivaji and others. They brought about considerable political revolutions. They also brought about movements of people and culture. This does not mean that favourable circumstances for the unfolding of the personality of the geniuses were lacking, but at least as much was due to the personality as to the circumstances. It is also a fact that under similar circumstances, if no genius arose, society kept to its even, wonted course for considerable stretches of time. All these revolutions, for revolutions certainly they were, were not built upon any unbearable

physical and economic conditions. Their causes were as varied and various, as the geniuses themselves, and the environment under which they were born.

Take again the Harijans in India. No conditions even in slavery, ancient and modern, could be found to compare with the physical and moral conditions under which a vast portion of humanity has been living from the very dawn of the historical period of the world. And yet there has been no revolution. Even the present upheaval is not of their creation, but from above. It is the same with the Negro emancipation in America. Whatever stir in the Negroes and the Untouchables there is to-day, is the result of the work done for them from above.

These historical examples from the east and the west prove that there are no sets of circumstances known to history, given which, a revolution would be an inevitable consequence. There seems to be no such inevitableness. The array of facts marshalled by historians as causes of a revolution are all, after the event. Even then the causes enumerated are so many, so various, so entirely embedded in the particular circumstances of the countries and the times and the personalities of those who played a prominent part in the drama, that it is well nigh impossible to lay down any scientifically correct preconditions of a revolution. Each is a unique event by itself. If there are, however, any conditions precedent, they are rather psychological and ideological than physical.

One such is the great gulf between peoples' ideas of what should be and what actually is. The physical and the economic conditions need not be quite unbearable.



Only there should appear to the contemporary eye, which is more or less unhistorical, a sharp contrast and a wide gulf between the actual facts of their life and their dreams.

If the gulf is wide enough, an upheaval may be expected. This is borne out by many a revolution, religious and political in the east and the west. Mental restlessness has always manifested itself when great changes are in sight. The inordinate emphasis given to economic factors is quite a modern phenomenon. The conditions under which the European proletariat lives to-day, are very much better than those under which their forefathers lived a century ago. Yet the old conditions were borne in patience, because the former generations of the poor took them to be more or less as pre-ordained and inevitable, and therefore necessary and just. Preaching of the new ideas of justice, equality and the rights of man and the discoveries of science have made out that these bad physical conditions need not be inevitable or necessary. They are altogether unjust. The old loyalties that made things bearable have broken down. The connection between the employer and the employed has become commercial and casual. In the case of big factories it has altogether ceased. The bonds of love and sentiment have also disappeared. What is, is not economically and physically worse than what was, but people are not willing patiently to bear even the improved conditions. The conditions have not deteriorated but the values of people have changed. Their ideas about right and wrong, about just and unjust, about their loyalties and their obligations, in short, their moral values have undergone revolutionary change. Whenever there

appears such a gulf between ideas and objective facts, society is in a critical and transitional stage. The equilibrium under which life is lived is disturbed. And any upheaval restorative of the necessary equilibrium may be in sight.

Another such psychological condition is a hope born in the human breast that better conditions are possible. The new hope is a clarion call to humanity. It is just like the voice of the prophet that the "Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, prepare Ye." This hope has an element of faith in it. It is rarely based on any purely reasonable grounds. Rather is it the result of an enthusiasm, fervour and fever that periodically overtake a section of humanity in its onward march. It may be due to a personality, an apt phrase or formula, or a significant event. The personality, critically analysed, may in the end turn out to be theatrical, half-crack, fanatical, neurotic or morbid. The phrase may be a half truth clothed in deceptive aphorism which the mass mind finds easy to repeat, and throw, in the face of its opponents as a weapon of offence and defence,—phrases like the "natural rights of man", "Liberty, equality and fraternity," "surplus values". The event may have no significance beyond the particular time and country. How hope is born in human breast, even the all-knowing psycho-analyst is ignorant of. This hope may be born even as humanity is already upon the upward curve and has traversed some distance towards the direction of progress. Generally it rises as the tendency to better conditions is visible. The present day hope of the proletariat is of this type. Hope generated by what has been accomplished by the ideas of justice and equality as worked out by the philanthropist and humanitarians

of the nineteenth century, as also by what the trade unions have been able to accomplish by their efforts, struggles, sufferings and sacrifices. Even as conditions improve, hope rises. It is not born of weakness and despair, but of strength and exaltation, realised as in a vision. It is born not because the actual conditions are the worst possible, but because the future has tempting, tinted, fiery rainbow colours.

There is yet another factor which inevitably accompanies revolutions, political, social or religious. This is that the new hope, the new faith, the new idea, the new gospel is born in a personality. The personality embodies in himself and in his life, as much of the idea as a human personality possibly can. The person with an idea is a man with a mission, in which he lives, moves, and has his being. His work engrosses him. He seems like one possessed. No trouble, no hardship, no sacrifice, is too much. Life and death do not count. The idea alone counts. The man with an idea, is a desperate person. He, therefore, becomes contagious. He carries everything and everybody before him. He, as it were, hypnotises his coworkers. Reason and logic do not count for the time being. They seem to follow him. He produces in himself and others a kind of enthusiastic fever which catches on and becomes irresistible. For a period he is supreme. It has also been found that once the idea is worked out and has succeeded, and the personality has outlived, he has lost his power and even his charm. He reverts to his proper place in the animal kingdom. *Virtue* seems to have gone out of him. He can no more perform the odds that he performed. Generally, his task finished, he disappears. But before the task is accomplished, he seems to carry about him

a charmed life. No sword or bullet seems to touch him. The best laid designs of his enemies are frustrated. He seems to be enjoying some special protection. His efforts to take himself off the stage prove of no avail. He is carried along irresistibly by an inexorable fate that gives him no rest, and allows no rest either to his companions or to his opponents. His task must be done. Such are the personalities, by whom revolutions are usually brought about.

So if there are any pre-requisites of a revolution, they are to be found more in the psychological and ideological fields than in the physical and economic conditions. The latter serve more or less as the necessary background. As a matter of fact this over emphasis on economic conditions as a necessary pre-requisite of a revolution, is a Marxist dogma. The word revolution had and has a wider meaning than a merely or preponderatingly economic connotation. It is because of this psychological and ideological background that the present day revolutionaries lay so much stress upon the spread of ideas. The power of ideas is brought out in relief by the so-called counter-revolutions. These have ever relied upon the propagation and preaching of an old and orthodox idea giving it a new meaning and a new interpretation. The counter-revolution comes even in the midst of physical and economic circumstances that are more or less identical. What changed is the values, the ideas and the personalities. It is therefore, that every revolution is more strict and censorious about the free expression of opinion than the regime that went before. Heterodoxy and nonconformity are deadly sins against a revolution. They are just like apostacy in religion worthy of the gallows and the stake. Everything else



can be viewed with leniency but not nonconformity in ideology. That must be ruthlessly put down even in former companions. The punishment must not only be harsh but swift. For ideas are more contagious than physical disease. They spread and multiply more than any germs known to science. They in their effect are more destructive. Those who have been installed in power by an idea know its potency more than the previous holders of power. The old idea does not require any very great propping up. The natural conservatism in man, habit and even lethargy support it. Then it has created vast vested interests. The new idea depends only on its strength. When it is attacked, it cannot fall back upon the support of conservatism, habit, lethargy or vast vested interests, all of which it has destroyed, and which it has not the time to recreate. So naturally it has recourse to suppression, and this suppression, if it is not quick enough, will overturn the whole apple cart of the new revolution. This is perhaps what happened in Afghanistan. Amanullah hesitated. He shrank back from the shedding of the blood of his countrymen. Lenin, Kemal Pasha, Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin have been more ruthless.

Let us, however, for the sake of argument, grant that physical and economic conditions are the all deciding factors which, we contend, they are not. Even then, no student of history, politics or economics, can foretell with any amount of certainty, the time when the revolution would arise. It may come any day, It may not come for a long time, and society meanwhile, may find a new readjustment.

Under such circumstances, to neglect the duty at hand would be a short-sighted policy. To refuse to

take steps to alleviate human suffering will be just as if a doctor refused treating a patient for he was engaged in the work of a scheme for the general hygienic improvement of a locality, which in course of half a century will eliminate all disease. The doctor under such circumstances, has always a double duty to perform. While carrying into effect his vast and expensive schemes he has to afford immediate relief. If he did not do this, he would be failing in his professional conduct, fixed after the ripe experience of generations of doctors and patients. If the doctor did not attend to the immediate trouble, such negligence of human woe would have an adverse psychological effect, not only on his profession, but upon the public at large. So also indifference to the actual misery and poverty around will have the effect of deadening the finer feelings in the reformer and the public, who would get habituated to witnessing human woe without any effort being made for its removal. Nay, if persisted in, such a policy would make of human beings mere tools and instruments. Provided a particular policy succeeds, it does not matter how much life is lost. Men and women come to be looked upon as mere pawns in the schemes of clever people who may be at least as many times wrong as right. Human beings have, under such circumstances, no value in themselves. It is such dangerous ideas that have in the past led to massacres, *auto-da-fe*, and reigns of terror. They still continue to exact the same toll only more thoroughly, for the machines of repression and suppression are more powerful to-day than they were ever before. Thus is the sanctity of human life lost.

It is no argument for the reformer that the tyrant, the selfish holder of power, the invader, the conqueror

and the fanatic, use men as mere pawns in the game of their selfish aggrandisement. They frankly use men as means. The reformer cannot defend himself by their example. He works for higher aims, for humanitarian motives. He has to keep an ideal before himself and his people, of justice, mercy and economy of human life. He must set up a better standard.

If the arguments of our opponents based upon economic and physical condition are, however, valid, what is there in these arguments being pursued actively and positively? If we allow conditions to remain absolutely bad and delight in their being what they are, and move no finger of ours to improve them, simply because such efforts by mitigating suffering, dull the edge of popular resentment, we may feel justified in welcoming all natural calamities. Nay, we will be justified in going further and taking positive steps to worsen conditions, simply to sharpen the edge of discontent. Any sort of incendiarism would be justified, provided it made wretched conditions still more wretched for the revolution to succeed. The only provision would be that one is careful to see that the odium falls upon the powers against whom resentment is sought to be created, and who are to be unsettled from the seats of their iniquitous power, by a revolution. If by mendacious and false propaganda, authorities can be blackened, that also may be done, provided the revolution is brought a little nearer. This would be to carry to its logical and diabolical conclusion, the doctrine, that "End justifies the means."

More or less the current morality without explicitly avowing the doctrine, has been acting upon it, specially

in political and group life. But in the past there were always traditional limits, set to human conduct. The greatest revolutionary and the greatest tyrant were not free from their binding force. Tradition created a conscience, which kept the cruel doctrine of "End justifying the means" under practical restraints. True, at critical times, under the stress of circumstances these restraints did give way, but only temporarily. The foundations were firmly laid in morality, custom, religion and even in popular superstition. To-day when current morality is suspect, religion is considered a spent out force, superstition is replaced by science, custom is ever changing. If such dangerous and disruptive doctrines are to guide conduct, humanity cannot but end in absolute nihilism. There can be no basis, no recognised standard for the conduct of the human group-animal except success. Already the signs of this coming nihilism are not wanting. The Great War showed to what destructive depths group animosities could degrade humanity, all in the name of success, for every nation had justifiable aims. The preparations that are now on in armaments in the camp, the factory and the laboratory for the next war, are such that would make the boldest and the most unscrupulous pause and think whether the present bases of morality are laid on sound principles when means are absolutely subordinate to the end. May it not therefore be that Gandhi insists that for him means and aims are convertible terms?

I am conscious that at critical times it is not given to human reason to weigh things in a nice, sensitive balance. We are first of all acting animals. All thought is for the purposes of action. Therefore in the world, we have to think even as we are on the run in this mad



human race. Rough and ready calculations will have to be made at critical times. Some life will have to be sacrificed, so that larger life to-day or in the future may be conserved. A Gandhi marching some thousands of miles with thousands of people cannot wait on the way to look after the halting and the lame of the expedition. If he is to avoid disaster they must be left to their fate, and he must march on. A Lenin in the midst of a revolution may not divert his attention from the main issue even by a famine. But such things can only be justified by the critical stress of circumstances when one is in the grip of a life-and-death struggle. Such doctrines would be dangerous if they were made into general principles and applied to more or less stable conditions. The stress and the strain of the times may be very great. Things may be in a flux; yet till one is actually in the grip of a revolution, when a false step may mean a disaster, one cannot look upon human woe, misery and death with philosophic indifference. The medicine of life cannot be made into its food. In point of time revolutions are entirely uncertain things. They may come to-day or may not come for half a century. A true benefactor of his people cannot afford to play with the destinies of the present generation of his countrymen lightly; he has to be careful. Even at the risk of slower work for the preparation of a revolution he has to take steps for the immediate amelioration of human woes. When the earthquake came in Bihar, the C. D. Movement there was practically suspended. Even the opponents, the Government, immediately set all the prisoners at liberty. The patriots could have done no less.

Therefore the reformers even like good doctors, have to do double duty. While preparing the people

for the coming revolution they have to keep solving the immediate problems. The solution of these problems itself would be a necessary training for the revolution. It will also give the leaders of the revolution a hold over the masses whom they have been serving in their day-to-day difficulties. The forces of the movement, if necessary may be divided, those who look to the immediate pressing demands of the hour, and those who create atmosphere for the coming revolution. At the end, when the historian sits to allocate the honour of the fight, who knows, the first may be the last, and the last first. The humblest then may have the place of honour.

The Bardolis, the peasant and village organisations, the trade unions, national education, untouchability, Khadi, prohibition and all work of a constructive nature are in a sense meant to solve the immediate problem. The most effective work in all these directions can only be done after the actual capture of power. The reformer has to have faith. He cannot bring the revolution by a scheduled time. The Revolution Mail will take its own time and course. In the meantime he has to do the work at hand in faith, never losing sight of the goal. In the stress of every day work covered with the dust of the soil, to a superficial observer, who did not look within, he might seem to have forgotten the end. So looked Gandhi from 1923 to 1929. He seemed to have forgotten the end. Many thought and said so in those days. But as a matter of fact the work of preparation was ever on. This was plain in 1930. If such a silent and necessary preparation did not go on, the revolutionary would miss his opportunity when the popular temper was ready to respond. Therefore, with

the hope and faith of a ceaseless and tireless worker. Gandhi says, "one step is sufficient for me."

No scientific socialist leader has condemned the work of the trade unions. It is reformatory, concerned with the immediate problem. Sometime it resolves itself to so many rupees, annas, and pies. Yet, it is necessary. It gives the moral qualities, the unity, the organisation, the group patriotism, the spirit of co-operation, obedience and subordination, with its necessary curb on inordinate ambition and jealousy, without which, no successful movement can be inaugurated. Deprived of such constructive activities, what are the rank and file to do? They cannot merely keep on creating ideologies and repeating slogans. They must patiently learn to work and manage affairs.

Further, can a revolutionary say that there is not sufficient dirt, squalor, disease, poverty, degradation and ignorance among the masses throughout the country, enough and more not for one revolution but for ten? A little less will not dull the edge of human inequity and inequality, which in all conscience is sharp enough and proposes to remain so in spite of the tiny efforts of the reformer. There is no fear of the physical and economic pre-requisites disappearing or even diminishing. So far as the constructive programme goes, as our opponents remind us, it does not touch the very fringe of the problem of inequality and poverty. If it is so, and so it is, they need not think, by the little help that we render by our humble efforts we are in any way postponing the day of reckoning. We who are happy to put a few coppers in the hands of the peasants, how happy will we be, if these coppers by the magic touch

of a revolution, were to turn into nickels or silver! We are not the ones to grudge the poor better wages and more equitable conditions. He would be no patriot nor would be a humanitarian, if he were satisfied with a few coppers as wages even for the spare hours of the peasant. It will be a low ambition indeed. We want our masses to grow to the fullest of their physical, moral and intellectual height. There should be no doubt that a man like Gandhi cannot wish for less. But he and his companions are practical idealists. For them the tragedy of the situations is, that for the poor these coppers do matter. For them it is a question of life and death.

Therefore without forgetting the revolutionary aim of the national movement, the constructive workers should shoulder the day-to-day work of social and economic reconstruction under existing circumstances. The history of our movement since 1920 amply bears out this contention. For whenever the movement of satyagraha has been inaugurated, whenever direct action has been decided upon, the khaddarites and the advocates of constructive work have never been found in the rear. Whenever the exhausted have cried halt it is again not the khaddar mentality that has cried halt. When it is the question of offices, who are in the background? As experience has shown, the people with the khaddar and the bullock-cart mentality. When it is hard, uninteresting drudgery that is demanded, who again are in the front? Surely the khaddar mentality has shown no lack of enthusiasm or courage in any hour of trial. So far as discipline is concerned, it has been the least troublesome. If suffering, readiness to sacrifice, obedience, organisation, honesty and absence of unworthy ambition and jealousy are the signs of a good



and effective revolutionary, the constructive workers still compare with any other in the country.

Throughout this discussion, I have not mentioned the new morality of non-violence in group life. I have kept the whole discussion on the basis of what even to-day is considered good and practical politics and economics. I have based my arguments not upon what ought to be but what actually is. I have never questioned the basis of the present day morality. I have not talked of the new yet old doctrines of non-violence and truth of Gandhiji.

*PART II*

**NON-VIOLENCE**



## VII

# THE TWO REVOLUTIONS

(October, 1931)

EVERY age has its problems and the problem now facing us is truly stupendous. It is not merely political. It embraces the whole of life in its various departments. Other people in their days had to adjust their lives to a single revolution. We in our time have to adjust ours to a double revolution. Hardly are we out of the one when we are faced with the other, greater and more comprehensive.

The first began with the advent and establishment of the British Raj. Overwhelmed by its organised, youthful strength, which like a hurricane carried everything before it, we stood agape at the achievement of the West in the brief space of about a century. We thought we could come up to their strength, their efficiency and their joy of life merely by copying their methods, accepting their values and adopting their attitude towards life's problems. Fired with zeal we, with hard cruel strokes, produced a hybrid civilisation which could be distinguished from the Western by its very inferiority. Like the mule it looked strong and serviceable but really was uncreative. This was but natural. How could it be otherwise with a race that had striven hard and accomplished much! It had therefore to pause and take stock of its past and strike a fresh path in keeping with its genius,—its *Svadharmā* and *Svabhāv*,—born of ages of experience and *Saṃskāra*.



This stock taking and striking a new path in keeping with the national genius constitutes the second revolution. The two are running side by side. Both have their votaries, though the first seems to be on the wane. The second has been creative in all those departments in which it has been able to find a path suited to the Indian temperament. I shall take some examples from Bengal to make my point clear.

The first Western impact on a religious people produced a religious ferment, resulting in the establishment of a new sect, the Brahmo Samaj. It had much to its credit. It produced some outstanding personalities. But it could not create a movement India-wide or penetrate into the masses, or draw the busy world's attention to itself. This was done by a more purely Indian movement,—I mean, the movement deriving its inspiration from Shree Ramkrishna and unfolded by the genius of Swami Vivekanand. This movement not only penetrated into the masses, affecting the whole peninsula, but arrested attention abroad. Today Shree Ramkrishna and Vivekanand are names that belong to the history of world's religions.

In literature, so long as Bengal was content to translate, it produced nothing worth mention. But soon came Bankim, Sarat Chatterji and the Poet. Who would dare to say of them that they are robed in foreign garments? The result has again been glorious. The Poet's name is one to conjure with all the world over.

In painting, Ravi Verma created in Western Realistic style goddesses devoid of the illusive grace of Indian womanhood. We are now familiar with the New Bengal School which, in fact, is the new Indian School

of painting deriving its inspiration from Bengal. It has something of the aroma of Ajanta. Its very earthly figures seem to be just descended from the clouds. It has already won a place in the world's gallery of painting.

In science, Jagdish Bose, working in the spirit of his people, has demonstrated the unity of life. Elsewhere science may invent life-destroying formulæ; in India, it could only demonstrate the unity of things, animate and inanimate.

These examples should suffice. Whatever has been inspired and informed by the Indian spirit, has been fruitful in a short time,—has been creative. Whatever aspects of national life have not cast off the foreign grip, show not only stunted growth but also barrenness. Take one example, architecture: In the land of the Southern temples and the Taj, there has not been, after the advent of the British, one building worth looking at, in spite of the activity of the Government, the Indian princes and the big zamindars. One has only to look at the Victoria Memorial nearby. New Delhi is a standing scandal. The villas in Western style, miscalled 'palaces', that our puppet Rajahs have built with the money squeezed from the starving peasantry, show the degenerate modern taste. Everything is expensively ugly.

If then we are to accomplish anything great we have to settle our accounts with the first revolution and cast in our lot with the second. Recently politics has come to the fore-front and absorbed our attention. We had fondly hoped that it was but a small portion of human happiness that governments could make or mar; but we soon discovered that upon the form of govern-

ment rested the foundation of our society; that our culture, if it was to survive and fructify, must be helped by free, indigenous, political institutions. It was, therefore, natural that the political problem should loom large.

The political awakening is about half a century old. It began under foreign inspiration and on foreign models which we neither understood nor assimilated. The result was a yearly assemblage of learned and ambitious lawyers for a trinity of days at Christmas time when their courts closed. They indulged in eloquence after the pattern of Burke and Sheridan, alternatively denouncing and blessing their foreign masters whose creations they were. They passed some resolutions and dispersed to meet again next Christmas. Some of them, more earnest and more leisured, made speeches in the toy councils, and collected facts and figures to arraign their masters at the bar of English public opinion. They fondly hoped that if their eloquent phrases, penetrating the Congress canvas could but reach the democracy beyond the seas, all would be well. Deluded by utterances of the Liberal politicians who had not even grasped the logical implications of their own slogans that they used for party purposes and were Imperialists in disguise, our leaders thought they had only to speak loud and long to get what they wanted. Their faith in British democracy and British Liberalism was childlike. Sometimes it was pathetic.

This naturally produced a reaction and a party of nationalists sprang up in the Congress. This party distinguished itself by its protest against the policy of begging, and by louder and more unequivocal denunciations of Government. It did talk of going among the

masses and of a programme of work which, however, it never carried out. Both parties were equally impotent. They could not satisfy the growing demands of the youth, nor allay the growing general discontent that was bordering on desperation. To the despair of the young was added a desire for revenge, born of the ruthless repression of all legitimate political activity, and of a belief in terrorist methods. The result was the formation of a secret party of terrorist nationalists, miscalled Anarchists. Anarchism is a philosophy of life connected with the honourable names of Kropotkin, Tolstoy and Thoreau, having little to do with the bomb and the pistol. But the average bureaucrat understood as little of this as the so-called anarchist who stood at his bar, charged with murder or attempt to murder. All these three political groups recognise the foreign Western models of political agitation,—the first frankly, the latter two with loud protests to the contrary. The first on bended knees paid their homage to the guru; the other two showed their affection of the West by implacable enmity. Hinduism, true to human psychology, recognises enmity and hatred also as modes of worship, as concession of superiority.

These exotic growths could not last long. The ineffectiveness of the one exasperated the nation. The other two by their destructive programme are fast proving their own inability to solve the national problem. They did their little work and to-day are in disintegration. A more truly national movement in politics is fortunately in the field already. It behoves us to examine its pretensions in some detail. For the time we will sit as students, above all prejudice or prepossession.



With the advent of Gandhiji in the political field the aims, objects and methods of political activity in India have been, so to say, revolutionised. Though he works through the same old institutions, yet everything is changed. Politics was considered an activity apart from the rest of life. It was cut off from religion, morality and social life. It had a passing connection with economics. It was one department that could be studied and practised apart from the rest of life. With Gandhiji life was one and, therefore, political activity was intimately connected with morality, with social reform, with economics and with welfare work in general. All these acted and reacted upon one another. Sometimes, for political action, it was necessary to lay the greatest emphasis on social or moral or economic reform. Formerly, it was possible for a nationalist in Bengal, Madras or Maharashtra to be a reactionary in matters social, and a radical in politics. Such anomalies have become matters of the past now. It was possible for a liberal to preach Swadeshi from the Congress platform decked from head to foot in the latest foreign material and fashion. It was quite possible for him to be a first rate leader with a few pegs inside his skin. His mode of life and activity were no bar to the highest offices in the National Assembly. All this has changed. Taught by Gandhiji, we have come to recognise that this Raj has no inherent strength but is propped up by our National and individual short-comings. It prospers on our weaknesses and vices. The best way to fight it then is by a process of self-purification and a reform in our institutions. The struggle for independence must go on, side by side with the efforts to improve ourselves. We may not for our Swadeshi wait till the establishment

of Swaraj and the consequent protective tariff. We may, even now, pass a self-denying ordinance, which may be helpful to industry and commerce. For a dry India, we may not wait for the shifting of power, but we may, by our example and peaceful picketing, produce a dry India. So about untouchability, Hindu Muslim unity, national education and village Panchayats. We need not wait till the advent of Swaraj for the necessary drain-cleaning. We must begin the work without delay, and such work must embrace the whole field of National life.

Some will doubtless say that these ideas were there even before Gandhiji. Some items were in the old programme of the Bengal and Poona nationalists. I am not here concerned to establish the priority of Gandhiji in the field of discovery. My point is proved if I can show that he has brought them more forcibly before the public, and has, in every case, seen to it that some organised constructive work is done. Had the nation showed more faith in his methods, and given him greater and more loyal support, more could have been accomplished in the last ten years than has been possible. Even as it is, the change has been tremendous. This may not be plain to the new generation as to those who had the good fortune or the misfortune of doing some serious political work before non-co-operation.

The second change brought about, is regarding the aims of the political movement. The aim to-day is not the change in the personnel of the administration, nor even merely the transference of the political power, or the driving away of the foreigner, but the establishment of a government of the people, by the people, and for

# NON-VIOLENT REVOLUTION

## VIII

### THE PROBLEM

#### I

#### THE INDIVIDUAL & THE GROUP

HUMAN civilization presents today rather a curious and complicated spectacle. On the one hand, there is greater frankness, justice, sympathy, love and charity than ever before and on the other, greater and increasing suspicion, distrust, antipathy, injustice, cruelty and hatred. Events and happenings that left former generations cold and indifferent affect the present generation powerfully. The unfortunate gets the sympathy and help that he was denied in former times. We have hospitals for the sick, homes for the leper, schools for the blind, the dumb and the deaf. We seek to mitigate, so far as we can, the cruelty of nature and man. Even in war, with all our hatred, as we inflict wounds, we provide Red-cross assistance. The child's and widow's wants are looked after as never before. The old, the disabled, the sick, the unemployed and the unfortunate are the recipients of succour and support. They have claims on us. The entire civilised humanity is sensitive to calamities that befall human beings in any part of the world. The whole world irrespective of race, caste, creed or distance is our neighbour today. Famine, flood and earthquake cause people from one end of the world to the other, to contribute their mite to alleviate

human woe and suffering. There is greater frankness, greater courtesy and better cheer in our behaviour towards each other. Street broils and drunkenness have progressively diminished; so have private feuds. Theft, arson and murder are the exception and not the rule in civilized society. Serfdom and slavery appear to have only antiquarian interest. Works of public utility and organised charity have sprung up everywhere. Knowledge is on the increase and is ever becoming wider and deeper. Reading rooms, libraries, museums, cinemas and the radio are broadening the bounds of knowledge. Artists, poets and literateurs find unprecedented patronage. Even the play and pleasure of men or women have come to be better organised and regulated. Humanity is cleaner in body and less liable to disease. Efforts are made to increase the average expectation of life. Child mortality has been astonishingly diminished. In disease, measures are taken to eliminate human suffering and pain. Even animals find a place in this general cheer and refinement. Man shows greater consideration to bird and beast. There are societies for the prevention of cruelty towards animals. In a variety of ways, life in civilized lands has become more easy and refined and less harsh and brutal. All this can be denied only by a prejudiced pessimist or a bigoted conservative.

However as soon as we leave the individual and the social field and turn to inter-group international life, we find that society has made no progress and has in some ways even receded back. Group life today recognises no law except that of the jungle. In spite of the modern annihilation of distance, groups hate each other more genuinely and thoroughly than they did before. Their



dealings with each other are marked by selfishness, prejudice, suspicion and distrust. While human happiness and life so far as individuals are concerned receive added consideration, when it comes to the question of groups, communal, economic, racial or national, all ideas of human fellowship and happiness are forgotten and human life has no value. There is no gentlemanly conduct as between groups, more specially the groups called nations. International relations are marked by a disgusting hypocrisy that to-day deceives nobody. Untruth and even downright dishonesty mark the mutual intercourse of nations. Espionage, deceit, false and malicious propaganda are shamelessly used as legitimate weapons in international relations. Bribery, chicanery, fraud, violence, theft, arson and murder have all their place and an honoured place in group relations. Human life has no value. Men are used as cannon fodder for ends that are not quite clear even to the politicians who use them so. Economic life is marked by exploitation. Each group wants advantages for which it is unwilling to pay the price. Inter-group relations are marked by pride, arrogance, and caste, colour and race prejudice. Wars have become, if less frequent, more disastrous and ruthless. Nothing is sacred, nothing is safe. The priest and the devotee, the artist and the literateur, the scientist and the philosopher, the artisan and the peasant are all mercilessly rushed to the front or the trenches. All the weapons of destruction that advancing science and human perversity have invented are requisitioned to settle imaginary disputes. The Howitzer, the tank, the aeroplane, the submarine are all legitimate weapons. The child, the woman, the neutral, the civil population, the non-combatant, are all annihilated and worse still

mauled and maimed by the bomb, the poison gas or the living fire. There is no justice, not to talk of generosity or mercy in inter-group relations. No rules of morality are ever observed. If there are any international conventions they are never kept in the midst of actual conflict. All these are facts which the most sanguine of the advocates of progress of mankind may not deny.

Why is all this so ? Why is human life so merciful and again so brutal ? Why is it so attractive and yet so repellant ? The true answer to this question may suggest remedies to the reformer.

### DUAL MORALITY

To us it appears that this gulf between individual and group conduct is due to the fact that humanity has, through centuries, not only tolerated but recognised two sets of moral values. What is considered good in social intercourse between individuals is considered evil in group relations. In private life we are bound by rules of morality and convention but in group life there is no such compelling necessity. If a politician is sent as the representative of his nation to another country his conduct is marked by falsehood and dishonesty. He may employ any methods and any agents to advance the real or the fancied interests of his nation or state. Secrecy, deceit and fraud are the key-notes of his conduct. An adjudged liar and a cheat finds no place in good society ; but in the political field, more specially in international field such worthies are honoured. They occupy high places in the nation's councils. An individual who deprives his neighbour of his rightful property is called a thief. But if a general who organises a successful raid on a neighbouring country gets the hero's honours. Theft,

even when caused by poverty and hunger, lands an individual in prison but theft on a national scale makes the thief worthy of a place in history. For taking human life the murderer is justly hanged but for murder en masse there is no punishment. Rather for those who murder on a vast scale are reserved the victor's crown and the triumphal march. In private life a meek, mild and a forgiving character has our approval but in political life reverse is the case. The successful politician is expected to be proud, revengeful and aggressive. Individuals have the right, nay the duty, to sacrifice their personal interests for their neighbour but if a group or a nation practised any such philanthropic goodness, not only will such a nation be annihilated but will also be considered as foolish. If an individual were pervert enough to make the innocent suffer for the guilty, he would be considered as antisocial, sadistic and subhuman; but a police or military officer if he terrorised a group, community or a nation for any real or supposed mistakes of a few individuals, such an officer would be considered an efficient administrator and a powerful leader of men. No society, however refined, can close its doors against the terrorist bomber or the raider. If such antisocial individuals observe the conventional ceremonies of their respective religions they are classed as good Muslims, good Hindus and good Christians. Whatever is right, proper and moral in individual and social conduct, becomes wrong, bad and immoral in group relations. What merits praise in one sphere of human activity calls for censure in the other. From day to day humanity, witnesses without protest the sorry spectacle of politicians and ministers of the state telling unblushing lies that even fail to deceive. Yet all these lying and deceiving public

functionaries are considered honourable men ! Some of them enjoy the reputation of being pious and God-fearing individuals. In private life the law of a Buddha, or a Christ, in group life the law of Moses, nay worse. Public and political life seems to have little contact with morals. All that counts in that field is success. There is a wide and unbridgeable gulf between individual and group morality.

Humanity in setting up this double morality and a double set of values, has failed to recognise the organic inter-relation between the individual and the group, between social and political life. The individual is nothing without the group. No group can function except through individual. If, group dealings are wild and violent this is bound to have an adverse effect upon individual and social life and upon general morals. Humanity can get really civilized only when both of its facets, the individual and the group, the social and the political get civilised. Moral man and immoral society cannot pull together profitably for long. Individual and social advance along side with group and political retrogradation would soon destroy the balance necessary for any abiding progress.

### HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

There are historical examples where when this inter-relation has not been recognised or worked out society has suffered a set back. Some relevant examples from Indian history will illustrate the point. The Indian people, specially of the higher classes, individually are generally clean. They have their constant ablutions and daily baths. Most of them change their linen every day. Their houses, kitchens, pantries, pots and pans are often



scupulously clean. Why is it that inspite of all this the standard of cleanliness in India is low? It is because, while taking care of personal cleanliness we neglect its collective counter-part. The common street, the village, the town, and the city are none of our concern. They are none of anybody's concern. We conveniently think that we can avoid dirt by eliminating it from our individual life. But the group is so connected with the individual that the filth that we carelessly throw out of doors, has the habit of returning back to us in the shape of flies, mosquitos, malaria and disease. It is not unoften that a person walking in the streets may get his clothes soiled with dirty water or something more substantial, thrown from upper stories by amiable ladies and gentleman who take a few baths every day to keep their persons clean. Society seems to have no right. It is the individual that alone counts. He recognises no group duties. The result has been disastrous both to the individual and the group.

Our fathers wanted to keep knowledge pure. They would not impart it to the undeserving, to the *unadhi-kari*. They confined it to the two upper classes. After centuries what has been the result? In spite of the Vedas, the Shastras and the many systems of philosophy that once we produced, today educationally, we are perhaps the most backward people. The Hindus swear by the four Vedas but how many of them have ever seen these books supposed to contain all human knowledge past and to come? The darkness in which we wanted to keep certain classes of our people has today enveloped all including the authors of this shortsighted policy.

We wanted to keep ourselves exalted and pure by creating a caste of untouchables. Today an Indian,

high or low, is a pariah not only in foreign lands but even in the land of his birth. The real Brahman, Kshatriya and even the real Vaisha is the Englishman. The Indian is an outcaste in his own holy land of the Himalayas and the Ganges. The nemesis has overtaken us. In this moral world every neglect whether of the individual or of the group is revenged by nature whose balance is sought to be disturbed.

The individual and the group are bound together. They are the two facets of one humanity. If one advances and the other is left behind the due balance is disturbed and in the long run this adversely affects both. Thoughtful men all over the world have genuine fears that if humanity does not solve the problem of group relations, if it does not regulate and moralise group life, all the advance made by civilization will have to be yielded back to nature and humanity reduced to that animal state from which it arose. A couple of world wars more will reduce the whole of human race to a condition of barbarism.

The question then is, how to regulate and moralise the group life which threatens to annihilate all our intellectual and moral conquests achieved through the centuries. Is there a way? If there is what is it? Let us see if the history of the progress of the social individual can afford any key to the problem.

# TOWARDS NON-VIOLENCE

## II

### THE LAW

How did the human individual rise in the scale of civilization? What methods did he employ? There was a time, not in all races simultaneously, when man lived in a state of nature, even as the animals do. It was a period of incessant, unceasing war of each against all. Human nature was as red in tooth and claw as animal nature. The law of the survival of the fittest in the physical sense had free and full scope. This state could not possibly last. Had it lasted long enough humanity would today have been an extinct species. Humanity survived because it discovered some other than the law of war and violence. What was this force of cohesion that united men and women in families, clans, groups and nations? This negatively put was non-violence and positively it was the law of love, leading to peace and co-operation. Not only the organisations and groups man has created and evolved but all human institutions have progressively passed from the stage of violence and war to that of co-operation and non-violence. Let us take a few examples to illustrate our point.

**The Family:**—The first and the most ancient institution that made continued human life possible, is the family. All its varied relations have been progressively becoming non-violent and shedding off violence. The head of the family had absolute right over the younger members, male and female. The wife and the child were the property of the husband and the father. He had control over their limb and life. At an early stage

he exercised this right of his, not by depriving them of limb or life but when in need, by disposing them as he would any of his other possessions. Then came the stage when he satisfied himself by awarding them corporal punishment; whenever they disobeyed or displeased him. Not even the State could question his right to violence within the family. Every fancied thwarting of his authority brought requisite chastisement. The punishments were of course graded to suit grades of disobedience, defiance or the parents' displeasure. Even today corporal punishment continues in family relations but every civilized State claims the right to interfere in extreme cases. Adults, males and females, are more or less free. The children are only just beginning to get their rights recognised. In case of cruelty, the modern State interferes with the authority of parents.

**Marriage :—**This institution has undergone strange transformations. Stealing, snatching, en masse kidnapping were good marriage customs sanctioned by usage. Strangely enough brides so curiously got were not pitiable victims of violence. There was as much romance, if not more, as today when marriage is a free commerce between two free and equal adults. The ideal is however yet to be reached. The violence of parents, caste, creed and colour prejudice yet dominates though subtly, this, the most delicate relation between man and woman. Today in advanced countries not only is marriage comparatively free but the subtle falsehood that marked the conduct of men and women when they wooed each other is replaced by a free and frank avowal of their affections. Pretence and coquetry are becoming progressively disrespectable.



After marriage the trend is towards progressive equality. Even economic disabilities are disappearing. What an advance from the times, when the husband after any long absence would greet his wife with the customary beating and if he did not greet her so she would feel that some coldness had crept into the relation! Would a modern belle ever believe that such relations sweetened married life not many centuries back, in the history of the race?

**Bringing-up of children :—**The ancients could never have believed that good breeding and education could be imparted to the young without kicks and fisticuffs. "Spare the rod, spoil the child" was the holy maxim of education. Even today it has not altogether lost its hold upon humanity. But progressively it is recognised that the whip and the rod are not the best way of training and educating even animals. To-day so far as possible even threats and harsh language are avoided. Children are coming into their own. Sunshine and laughter is brought into their lives. They are treated with care and consideration.

There was a time when every curiosity of the child was satisfied with a slap. Better-mannered parents had recourse to falsehood and subterfuge to satisfy inconvenient child curiosity. Today, in decent schools and refined and cultured homes, not only the rod but even falsehood and deceit in the treatment and up-bringing of children have disappeared or are in the process of disappearing.

The very psychology of the civilised child has undergone a change. While his forebears got breeding, knowledge and religious training at the point of the rod, he today refuses to be so educated. He must be treated with

care and consideration before he would consent to unfold his possibilities. If undue pressure is brought he develops queer complexes and may even become neurotic.

**Religion:**—It began with fire and sword, with human and animal sacrifices, with forcible conversions and periodical massacres. Wars were waged in the name of religion involving fairly large portions of the earth. Today, except among very backward people, it is recognised that beliefs cannot be changed nor the heart converted by violence. Subtle bribery, clever propaganda, educational and social service are therefore the new devices employed in missionary work. But even this veiled violence is condemned, because it offers worldly rewards to induce spiritual conversion. The missionaries who employ such methods of fraud and subtle violence are not much appreciated. Their motives are suspect. They are credited to care more for numbers, that give them power, than spiritual values. Progressively is religion being recognised as individual's private concern. Real conversion is the conversion of the devotee's heart in search of truth. Any deviation from this is recognised as violence by the spiritually sensitive.

**Commerce:**—It began as loot, stealing and piracy. Not long ago in the West commercial syndicates were formed and chartered, with their respective governments, for raids on land and sea. That was all the commerce they knew. In England of Queen Elizabeth's time it was good commerce to play the Sea-dog on Spanish ships that brought precious cargo from America. The cargo so looted was itself the result of like commercial conception on the part of the Spaniards. Kidnapping the Negro from his native land and selling him as slave on American plantations was lucrative business for the Englishman

and he would have fought to the knife to maintain what he then considered as a fairly and justly won monopoly in this traffic in human flesh. Today all these things have disappeared. Of course, commerce and industry are not yet free from subtler forms of violence and fraud. But the progress made is immense. A merchant's word is as good as his bond. While fraud is always possible, the normal relations in commerce are guided by a desire for mutual benefit. Goods are supplied to sample, fixed prices are progressively coming in vogue. Efforts are made to eliminate dishonesty and fraud in this eminently selfish activity of humanity. Yet many forms of violence, in the shape of dumping, exploitation and starving of labour continue. Progressively however human conscience is awakening and asserting itself against these.

**Government** :—It had its origin in violence. When established, it worked by violence. The arbitrary will of a powerful individual was the law of the land. This will also did not work on any known or general principles. It was whimsical, arbitrary, passionate and revengeful. It knew nothing of persuasion or consent. It worked by suppression, repression and terrorism. In course of time, however, the individual's will came to be replaced by that of a group, a ruling or caste class. A group however small could not work without some general principles. Definite laws therefore were laid down and afterwards recorded. Later still codes were compiled. Yet, very often these rules were violated by the members of the ruling group. There was no equality before the law. Whimsical oligarchies were however in course of time replaced by democracies. Democracy introduced equality before the law. This law, to have the true quality of law, must reflect the general will. It must be made and abrogated only

by the elected representatives of the people. Judiciary was made independent of the executive. Even then the process of democracy was not complete. In practice it was found that popular governments were democratic only in form and name; they really were veiled oligarchies. The poor were too poor, to be free to exercise their vote and make their will felt in the decisions of the government. Efforts are therefore being made today to supplement political liberty with social and economic equality. However the theory yet is that all governments are based upon coercion and force, though in civilised modern states the force behind a government is not actual but potential. It is kept in the background to be used as a last resort or just as a powerful threat to the antisocial elements. Normally there is little actual force or coercion used.

**Criminal Law** :—To begin with crime was the sole concern of the individual or the family. The State had nothing to do with it except when it was high treason. It was quite legitimate for the party injured or for friends and relatives to seek redress from or wreck vengeance on the offending individual or his relatives and friends. Quarrels were inherited by children as really any other property. There were hereditary family feuds that descended from father to son through generations. Later on the State came in. It began by interesting itself in these family feuds. Revenge was regulated. Later still every crime including murder had a monetary value attached and the parties were free to settle a quarrel by giving and taking money. The state came in only to see that the proper price was paid. There has been a slow change from crime being regarded as a private affair to its becoming a public offence. Progressively the state has asserted its authority. Today a great part of crime is



the state's concern. It is supposed to be not merely against individuals but against society and the state. The parties are bound to refer to the courts and all punishments are awarded and carried out by the public authority in public interest. Individuals even when aggrieved, are often mere witnesses.

**Punishment.**—It was sanguinary and cruel. Enslavement, mutilation, crucifixion, painful and public death were common. In England as late as the beginning of the 19th century hundreds of what today would be considered petty crimes were punishable by death. Mutilation, branding and disfiguring were common. All this is changed today in civilized lands. Some civilized countries have abolished altogether the death penalty. Where it exists, the final exit of a criminal from the field of his anti-social activity is made as private and painless as possible. The very theory of punishment is changed. Today very few believe in the theory of vengeance and revenge or even restraint for the sake of mere safety. Progressively it is being realized that criminal tendencies, where not created by heredity, adverse circumstances, bad surroundings and defective education, are a disease, to be eradicated more by psychological treatment than by physical punishment. Jails have become reformatories, where criminals are taught some useful profession or handicraft, cured of their criminal tendencies and sent out in the world healthy and whole, to begin life anew as good and normal citizens.

**Civil Law.**—It began with the creditor being the sole judge of the means by which he was to get his own. The State did not interfere. He could make the debtor a temporary or permanent slave. He could deprive the debtor of his limb or life. The State began with

putting a limit to the lengths to which a creditor could go for the realization of his debt. First the life and limb, then the freedom of the debtor, was secured from the clutches of the creditor. Progressively his heirs descendants were immune from the creditor's demands, except in so far as the descendants inherited the debtor's assets. Today the creditor has only some restricted and limited rights upon the debtor's property. These rights must also be adjudged by the state; and even when he gets a decree, that itself can only be executed with the help of the officers of the state in a prescribed manner.

In the case of enforcement of contracts, in the treatment of servants and employees, in short in the case of innumerable other social relations and institutions we find the same process at work. In all spheres of human life and activity, the way of progressive civilization has been the way of non-violence, co-operation, love and truth. But for these basic principles society would have been torn to pieces and human life on this planet made impossible. This has been the process through which the individual had to pass to civilize himself. The group too, if it is ever to be civilized, must pass through the same process. In group relations too, suspicion, distrust, hatred and violence must be replaced by trust, truth, love and non-violence. Unless this is done, both the individual and the group life stand in danger.

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Humanity to tame the individual and make him social and civilized employed a two-fold method. It first informed and reformed his mind and then created external circumstances, checks and hindrances, that made unsocial conduct difficult and painful. On the one

hand there was a psychological and an ideological approach, on the other hand an institutional and external approach. The individual's mind and will was converted by the teachings, preachings and examples of the great ones, the reformers and the prophets. Whatever was gained by this process was institutionalised by the lawgivers, the statesmen and great rulers and kings of mankind. The inner and outer process went on together. Whenever the ideological and reformatory advance failed to get its requisite and necessary institutions, it was lost in course of time. If external institutions outran psychological factors, the institution came to grief and perished for want of an inner urge and necessity.

In the reformation of the group too, a double process, internal and external, ideological and institutional will have to be employed. We have a recent example of an institutional advance ahead of the ideological advance coming to premature but inevitable grief. The main cause of the failure of the League of Nations can be traced to the fact that humanity has not yet recognised the propriety, justice and efficacy or even the need of truth and non-violence in group relations. All the members of the League, whatever their professions, believed in war and diplomacy; not only the group mind but the minds of individuals, are not yet prepared to change in this respect. There has been some preaching, but not enough to convert individuals or groups to a newer group morality. With distrust in each other and with each member-nation piling up armaments and making secret alliances, how could the League survive? That it has dragged on a maimed existence, for so many years, is not due to its inherent strength but due to the weakness of the defeated nations, exhausted and

intimidated by the Great War. Even as fear and exhaustion are disappearing, the appetites of the nations are rising and they are nearing another greater and more catastrophic war.

## THE WAY

### III

HERE then in the midst of this distracted world comes Gandhi with his message of truth and non-violence. He comes to carry on a historical mission and fulfil a historical need. Fortunately for us he combines in himself not only the necessary ideological basis of the new reform but also the capacity to organise in it external institutions. Absolute, unequivocal religious faith in truth and non-violence, in all departments and aspects of life, in an age of cunning diplomacy, violence and war may produce a natural doubt in the minds of many, specially his opponents, about the sincerity of his professions. But this would be a superficial if not a prejudiced view. His ideas may appear novel and unpractical! They may be put down as the outpourings of a mystic and a visionary. But we may not forget that he has been able to organise them and make them yield some tangible results. Whether ultimately he will succeed in instilling a living faith in his followers and respect in his opponents, for the principles he stands for is yet in the womb of the future. But the results so far achieved have been startling. Apart from the non-violent struggles that he fought in South Africa, Champaran, Kaira and Bardoli he has led three all-India campaigns, two of them initiated by him and the third thrust upon him by the Government. In the latter struggles a nation was up in revolt against the unjust might of the most powerful and the



most organised empire in the world. And yet no fight on such a vast scale involved less violence and less hatred. The loss of life has been negligible. The orphan's and the widow's wail comparatively rare and subdued. The noncombatants' lives and property have been quite safe. So have the opponents' life and property been safe. The toll of human misery and suffering has been the least. Ordinary violent revolts, with less moral and material gains, have often involved nations in greater violence, hate, suffering and bloodshed. The losses to both the victor and the vanquished have been greater. In Gandhiji's non-violent struggles the material loss has been insignificant on either side. The moral loss to the tyrant has however been incalculable. After these three Gandhian fights Swaraj for India today appears to be only a question of time. The soul of India has cast off the spell and the fear of the foreigner. His prestige is gone, his moral hold is lost, his back-bone broken. True, Swaraj has not been attained. Could three small efforts, of a population so unorganised, so unaccustomed to national effort, divided in castes, and creeds and communities, with centuries of slavery behind it, achieve freedom for them in such a small span of time as 15 years, even by violence? How many hard and prolonged struggles had not Italy, Ireland and other nations to fight to achieve national independence? What a toll of human life and human suffering, through what length of time! What a generation of mutual ill-will and hate! From all this India has been free. Gandhi has discovered a moral equivalent for war. He has organised it and made it effective. It has yielded some tangible results. It has not completely solved the national problem yet. His is just a pioneer movement showing the direction. But as a pioneer movement, its achievements have been far from

negligible. It has drawn to itself the attention of the thoughtful, the world over.

Historical circumstances have set before Gandhiji a limited task, that of national independence. What his strategy would be if India were free, what new kind of non-violent methods for settling inter-national disputes he would introduce, what truthful diplomacy he would evolve are questions, to which it is difficult to give a definite answer today. Perhaps Gandhiji himself as a practical reformer can give no convincing answer to these questions. But the task set before him by history is circumscribed. He has to free his nation from the insolent might of a foreign imperialist domination. In this fight he has supplied his nation with a new ideology, a new weapon and a new strategy. He has institutionalised his ideology. He has organised truth and non-violence in external resistance.

The satyagrahi bears no ill will. Yet he does not solely rely upon his inner individual soul force. He externalises this inner force, he canalises it, he organises it and makes it work through institutions. He works not only for psychological but also for physical and external results. As every inner spiritual force loses some of its purity when it is made to work in the external field with mixed materials, so does satyagraha get partially dimmed by the very organisation it creates and the material it employs. The loss in this intensity of a spiritual force when it is translated in the material world is inevitable. It is the price demanded by nature. Pure spirit has no body. It requires no material medium. But then such a purity is not of this world. Let therefore nobody point the finger at Gandhiji and his doctrines of truth and non-violence, if all his instruments have not been as transparent as he

would have them, if some little heat has been generated, and if some violence mental or even physical has been manifested here and there. In this world, whoever does better than everybody else before him, has done the best. Of the absolute best, humanity can have no more than passing and transient glimpses.

### THE OLD & THE NEW LAW

The Law of love and non-violence as applied by Gandhiji to group relations is however somewhat different from the same as applied through the ages, in individual relations. As preached by the religious teachers, it was predominantly psychological, internal and individual. It had, of course, practical application but it could not solve immediate problems in the external world. It rested on its own inherent strength. If it did not yield concrete results in the near future, the belief was, that it was bound in course of time to benefit somehow, somewhere. Its kingdom after all was not of this world. It was strong in its own faith. It cared not for results here and now. The old doctrine of *ahimsa* therefore put forth no effort to organise itself. It is notorious that the good and the pious, relying upon the inherent justice and superiority of their cause, disdained to unite, organise or co-operate. The pious and the good have always been so many individuals. If they cared to organise themselves, that organisation, as in the case of Buddhism and Christianity, was not for mundane affairs but for helping the spiritual community to get to the final goal, the final extinction, *nirvan* or beattitude. In world affairs the faithful somehow induced themselves to believe that the machines of God or nature will automatically work out favourable results for them. Even if the results were not favourable to their limited visions they were content to leave them to the omniscient



wisdom. The evil, beings not so sure of Divine help have ever relied upon themselves and perfected their organisations. The result is that while there has been no dearth of inner consolation and inner joy for the good, the evil ones, relying solely upon themselves, have organised and co-operated and monopolised all the good things of this earth.

The old law of love was also the law of non-resistance. Resist not evil, walk two miles when compelled to walk one, give away thy cloak in addition of thy coat, present the other cheek; for what need have ye of the good things of the world? See the lilies of the field. They toil not yet they grow. They neither spin nor weave yet Solomon in all his glory was not decked as one of these! A Hindu saint felt the presence of a thief in his cottage at night. Knowing there was nothing for this good neighbour of his to take away, he managed to throw off his solitary blanket to make it convenient for the thief to take it away. Of course, the story, like all such stories, ends with a moral. The thief when he took away the blanket, was converted and became a holy man. Such stories about the saints are found perhaps in most religions. They have inevitably a happy ending; either the evil doer is converted or he comes to grief, may be to a premature and violent end. It was even held, that one must not be too non-violent and leave the burden of vengeance solely upon God or nature, whose mills grind slow but grind sure. The saint was enjoined to make some show of annoyance, speak some harsh words, lest his victim be absolutely ruined.

Such a doctrine without appropriate external organisation was suited for the Sanyasi, for the renounce only. It could not possibly work in mundane affair



However fruitful for the soul, the spiritual life and the hereafter, it could not be useful in organising the external life and relations of humanity. As such it was not suited to group political relations nor even to internal administration, primarily concerned with outward conduct and practical results, and that too in no dim distant twilight of the future but here and now. Masses of people cannot live a life of utter renunciation or martyrdom for long. They cannot find clothes, food, and houses by such purely spiritual means. Material goods need the organisation of external nature. How can masses of men find consolation in the hope that their innocent sufferings would raise forces in the future that would confuse and confound the wicked? Nor, again can they derive satisfaction from thought that their sacrifices will melt the hearts of the cruel and convert the wicked. If the principles of non-violence and truth are to work among average men and women, if they are to function in group life, they must be so organised as to yield tangible results, in this world, within a fairly measurable period of time. If they are to do this they must be externalized and made effective. They must impress practical intelligence and wisdom in their service and evolve a machinery and strategy suited to their particular and peculiar requirements. Such an organisation and such practical application of reason and intelligence, such machinery and strategy are supplied by Satyagraha, as enunciated and practised by its author and initiator. In this practical application, truth and non-violence, may lose some of their depth but this is more than compensated by the breadth of the field over which their control is extended.

### THE NEW TECHNIQUE

And what was perhaps not possible in former ages is

possible now. The world today is so sensitively organised, that the functioning of its complex machinery can be effectively stopped by Satyagraha, by downing tools and withdrawing co-operation. It has also become increasingly sensitive to public opinion, with the advance of political democracy, the modern annihilation of distance, the press and publicity. All this is illustrated by what happens in the settlement of industrial disputes. A whole industry can be paralysed in no time if the workers refuse to co-operate with the management. The paralysis of one industry, today, affects more or less other industries too. A general strike, a general downing of tools by labour, would compel the most organised modern Government to come to terms. Its very machines of war and destruction would lie idle without the co-operation of labour.

More than ever before, it is today realized that to keep tyranny going, not only the passive acquiescence of the oppressed but their active co-operation, secured by whatever means, is essential. The chains that bind the poor and the oppressed are to a great extent of their own forging. Once they refuse their help or co-operation the whole fabric of industrial, commercial and governmental injustice and oppression would collapse. It is this that has made the trade-union movement not only possible but formidable. This has put hopes for the future in the heart of the proletariat. The masses have come to realise that they are the fount of all power and the backbone of all industry, commerce and Government. All that they need is to organise and co-operate with each other and to non-co-operate with the powers that be, whether economic or political. Nobody but the interested would consider strikes or even a general strike beyond the pale of practical politics today. It is universally recognised

that but for industrial strikes many valuable labour reforms would have been overdue. What makes strikes possible and effective can also make extensive satyagraha possible. The same kind of machinery and the same kind of organisation would be sufficient. The difference will not be so much in the external practical instruments used but in the inner spirit that guides and informs the two.

Industrial strikes are based upon the recognition of conflict of interest, upon class antagonism and class war. The fundamental principle is class rivalry. The loss of one class is the gain of the other. Strikes are, therefore, based upon class conflict, animosity and hatred. In spite of this enmity and hate strikers do eschew violence. Those who have successfully organised strikes know the value of non-violence. They know that scrupulous adherence to non-violence is essential for success. They know that the physical forces against them are so powerful and so organised, that they can keep the morale of their people only by saving them from terrorists' reprisals and consequent demoralisation. Often the authorities have found it cheaper, easier and more possible to break a strike by inducing or inciting the strikers to indulge in violence. If that has not succeeded they use *agents provocateurs* to bring violence. Successful strategy in industrial strikes always uses peaceful and non-violent methods. What is however dictated by policy in the industrial field becomes, in satyagraha, a life principle. It is also the basic principle of all organised life. The satyagrahi recognises the fundamental unity of life in spite of seeming conflict of interest. What the striker does out of weakness and want of physical strength and weapons, the satyagrahi does out of his moral strength.

He knows that in war too, it is the stamina and the morale of the, more than its physical strength that counts and makes for ultimate success. He therefore puts his trust in moral qualities rather than material. And yet he does not disdain external instruments. But these are not instruments of destruction. They are instruments of co-operation and organisation. He knows that the tyrant prospers more by organisation than by brute force. He opposes the violent organisation of the oppressor with his own non-violent organisation. However, the individuals co-operating in his organisation possess a higher morale, born of their belief in non-violence and the justice of their cause. This belief in ethical principles and the justness of his cause makes the satyagrahi not only careful of his motive and his goal but also careful of the materials and the means he uses. He is non-violent not out of painful necessity and weakness but out of his free choice and moral strength.

The leader of satyagraha has however to work with material of varying degrees of education, intelligence and moral evolution. He does not therefore disdain to accept external conformity, where he cannot get the genuine inner strength. He accepts non-violence in deed, as even a religious reformer accepts external conformity in conduct, in the belief and hope that continued external conformity will produce habits of conduct which ultimately may, and many times do, affect the mind and change the heart. He however, knows the evil effects of mere mechanical conformity. He tries to minimise its effects by constantly insisting on the purity of heart. But he must take risks, as any practical worker has to. However, the external conformity that the leader may accept from the ordinary rank and file he may not accept



from his chief lieutenants and those who act as leader in his movement.

Satyagraha has been translated in English as passive resistance or non-co-operation. These words scarcely convey its true significance. There is nothing passive about satyagraha, nor is satyagraha a negative conception. It is a positive doctrine of work, organisation, struggle and resistance. It is passive so far as armed resistance is concerned but its moral resistance is very active and determined. This moral opposition renounces all benefits accruing directly or indirectly from co-operation with tyranny and evil. This necessarily implies an element of purification in the lives of individuals engaged in it. It would be some kind of reformation, some kind of change of heart. It would necessarily impose certain restrictions, controls and *Sanyams*. Sometimes these restrictions may be about things and actions ordinarily innocent and amoral in themselves, such as intimate social intercourse with the official world or the use of foreign articles, or the acceptance and use of titles, government schools and law courts; at other times the restrictions may really be of things and actions which are neither innocent nor amoral but positively bad and harmful, such as untouchability and the use of intoxicating drugs and drinks. Some people seem to think that such restrictions are a peculiarity of Satyagraha. But a little thought would make clear that some restrictions have always characterised effective and concentrated action in any direction. All religious national and idealistic struggles in the past used them. The Christian, the Muslim, the Puritan and the Sikh armies had, and as a matter of fact all armies that mean business, must have some taboos and restrictions. Nobody can accuse the Bolsheviks of spiritual values, yet the num-

ber of restrictions imposed not only upon the leaders and the soldiers but upon ordinary citizens would be legion.

### PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

The practical application of truth and non-violence to group life also changes in action the doctrine of "non-resistance to evil" as held by the spiritual and moral reformers of old. Satyagraha is no doctrine of "non-resistance to evil" in the old sense. The non-resistance, as we have said, has reference only to physical and violent methods. For the rest it has got to be the most stubborn and determined resistance. For instance Gandhiji would not say that because the British by a century and a half of political and economic exploitation have deprived India of crores of rupees, therefore, to effect the spiritual reformation of their hearts, or to make the engines of nature's retribution to work, let India send away more of its hard earned money to England! He would rather say that the money taken away has been the result of our co-operation with evil. Let us reform our ways, re-organise our production distribution, and consumption of our wealth on the basis of swadeshi and thus check flow of wealth from our country. To the Indian merchant and middle man he would say, it is sinful to deal in foreign cloth and such other commodities that can be made here. He would tell the importer of foreign goods that the profits he makes represent tainted money the wages of sin. He would ask the consumer to refrain from the sin of degrading himself and starving his neighbours, by patronising foreign products. He would tell him that his first duty is to his Indian brethren. To the drunkard the satyagrahi will not offer two cups of toddy when he asks for one. He would rather see to it that the psycho-

logical and physical inducements to drink are taken away. If and when he has power he would not hesitate to legislate against this evil. Gandhiji for instance when shown the King's coin will not like Jesus in similar circumstances say, "Render unto Caesar the things that belong to Caesar." He would rather say, to Caesar should belong the honourable and proud privilege of service to the community. Gold and silver he shall have, only so much and in so far as is necessary for him for the discharge of his noble trust and no more. He shall have enough to live as befits the trustee and the servant of the poor. Gandhiji would also enquire if Caesar's stewardship had the approval of the people. What however, he will not be particular about would be the colour of Caesar's skin, his nationality or denomination. If on the pertinent points of inquiry there is no satisfactory answer, woe be to Caesarism and not to Caesar. A Satyagrahi has no quarrel with persons and individuals as such. His opposition is to systems and institutions. As long as individuals work a wrong system and identify themselves with it they are to be resisted. The opposition to them is due to the position that they occupy as parts of a machine. It is not personal opposition. Experience has shown that the conduct of the best amongst us is coloured by the position we occupy in a system. If the system we administer is bad our conduct is likely to be bad. Moreover, the satyagrahi believes that the officials are themselves as much the victims of the system that they help to work, as those who are crushed under that system. He therefore bears no illwill towards individuals as such.

Non-resistance to evil as conceived of old was purely a spiritual doctrine. It prescribed an individual's duty towards himself and his maker. To a certain extent

regulated social duty. But it had nothing to do with group conduct except as individuals affected it. Satyagraha is both an individual obligation and a social and political duty. Non-resistance of the old type again was a vindication of an individual's right not to submit to insolent might or to any wrongful authority, be it of the family, the social, economic or political group. Satyagraha in addition to all this provides for corporate and group action. It is not merely to vindicate one's individual right and register one's individual protest, but to take collective action and if need be bring about the end of a bad social, economic or political system by making its working impossible. The motive throughout is not violence or coercion or revenge but the performance of one's duty which entails the right to refuse co-operation and support to a system that works for one's degradation and enslavement. Satyagraha thus conceived as a group activity must hamper and embarrass those who work an evil system. That is inevitable. In a complex world where interests do not always coincide, duty cannot be performed without some conflict. More so is the case in group life. But the conflict is not of the creation of persons and groups who seek to perform their moral duty. And when the duty is performed without ill-will, truthfully and non-violently, the opponent cannot possibly complain of being hampered. The choice is always with him to avoid the situation and the consequent embarrassment. However, it is quite possible for conflict to arise between two individuals or groups who seek to perform what they honestly believe to be their duty. Under such circumstances a satyagrahi raises the fight on a higher moral level involving no falsehood, fraud, violence or hate.

In non-resistance to evil, as conceived by the ol



prophets, there is a powerful element of the reformation of the opponent, of the change of his heart. In Satyagraha too there is this element, only, it works in a somewhat attenuated form. The group and the official mind is morally less advanced and more mechanical than the individual's mind. It is less amenable to reason or moral influence. Self-analysis whether moral or intellectual is difficult for it. Generally the group mind is morally and intellectually, less evolved than the individual mind. The group mind being more amenable to group suggestion, is quickly moved to pride, passion, anger, jealousy, hate and revenge. One wonders if a group has a mind in the same tense as an individual has. However there appears to be such a thing as the group or the official mind. The Satyagrahi cannot work upon and affect this group mind as effectively or as quickly as he can an individual's mind. The former is more material and mechanical and therefore less responsive to moral and spiritual appeals, in as much as its actions are predominantly external. Yet whoever has followed the working of Satyagraha in action, cannot have failed to observe that there is conversion of individual and sometimes of important individuals. Also, the urge in the opposing group to use violence is greatly reduced. Its anger and malice get very little food to feed upon. Its hands often beat helplessly the empty air. Receiving no adequate resistance they exhaust themselves by ineffective action. Also the good will and sympathy of neutrals, whose opinion and moral support count in all prolonged struggles, is denied to it. These are always with the satyagrahi. Thus directly and indirectly the heart is affected and influenced. In this connection one has also to take into account the fact that a Satyagrahi group itself cannot be as non-violent, dispassionate, truthful and pure as an individual Satya-

grahi. This necessarily retards the process of the change of heart.

Those who consider the strategy of Satyagraha as impracticable, have not given proper thought to the subject. Though there are some stray examples of non-violent action in history, ancient and modern, it must be admitted, that Satyagraha as conceived by Gandhiji is something new. In a very modified form it has been practiced in the industrial field. Slowly it is gaining ground there. In international affairs it is now plain that if war is to be eliminated, it cannot be done by the use of ever sharpening instruments of destruction. This process multiplies armaments and creates new fears, new hatreds and new conflicts. There are many small nations to-day who genuinely want to avoid war. Yet they too have to heap up armaments because no other way of avoiding conflict appears possible to them. They are caught in the race, though they know full well that they have no chance of successful resistance, against bigger and more resourceful nations. It is thus that the vicious circle created by violence and hate keeps on spreading its wide net. It can only be broken by methods other than that of group hate and group violence. To-day in group relation the words of a Buddha and a Christ appear prophetic. Not by hate but by love can hate be overcome; not by violence but by non-violence can violence be overcome.

### THE NEW PLAN

Gandhiji, in keeping with the traditions of his faith and the genius of his country, is evolving a method, a plan and a philosophy for world peace. He believes that progressive non-violence and truth which have civilised the individual in his social relations, must also

guide and inform inter-group and international relations. There was a time when individual violence sometimes solved the individual's problems. His only chance of getting justice was through individual retribution and retaliation. The reformer and the prophet sought to regulate this violence. He prescribed the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. He knew if he did not do this something worse would happen. As the human animal progressed, this law no more worked satisfactorily. Once it had served humanity but now it hampered further growth. Advancing humanity had therefore to discover a new and a more serviceable law than that of a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye. To-day if he used this law he would find himself in deep waters. Instead of getting his wrongs redressed he would find himself deprived of some of his remaining rights. There is to-day a well recognised method and a process of getting individual wrongs redressed. The old rule will therefore no more avail. Not long ago if a man refused a challenge to fight on any issue real or imaginary he would make himself ridiculous. The person challenging may well leave his opponent with a smile of derision for his lack of bravery. But to-day in civilized society such challenges are simply not given. They belong to a barbaric age and any manifestation of the old spirit, even when justified, involves censure and in extreme cases state interference and punishment.

In group life too, whatever may have been the efficacy of the law of violence and war for the redress of group wrongs today they fail to yield the desired results. Whatever ennobling and civilizing effect war may have had in the past, to-day it merely brutalises humanity and increases the range of hate and violence. It can no



more civilize or raise the group. It only degrades it and the degradation of corporate life has a baneful reaction on the individual. War today has utterly failed to solve the problems of adjusting group relations, redressing group wrongs, evolving a group morality and creating a new world order.

### BOLSHEVIC WAY

Bolshevism and communism claim to solve the problems created by war and violence. But the instruments employed are the old instruments of diplomacy, hate, violence and war. Again the communists pin their faith in group antagonism and class war. Instead of smoothening over they actively foment and accentuate hatred, division and difference. The plea is that class conflict and class war already exist in the present social order and no realist can afford to ignore them. Satyagraha too is realistic. It recognizes group conflict and group rivalries. But it tries to minimise and eliminate rather than accentuate these. It seeks to find points of contact and co-operation. In the intercourse of individuals too, there is mutual rivalry and antagonism but the seer, the reformer and the gifted statesman discovers points of contact, co-operation and mutual interests. He emphasises the common humanity underlying obvious differences. He emphasises the points of contact and tries to canalise and organises them. He does not make it his business to go about accentuating, emphasising or inventing differences. Rather even where differences and animosities exist, he induces individuals to forget them and calls for cooperation in the common task of living a corporate and civilized life. Satyagraha does likewise in group life. It seeks to find points of contact and co-operation. It bases



its appeal on common humanity. Where it fails to do this, it tries to regulate the conflict for the redress of group wrongs, and make it non-violent and peaceful. It tries to eliminate so far as it can, passion and hate. It refuses to indulge in false and malicious propaganda. It does not paint the enemy in black colours. Rather the opponent is credited with common humanity. He is supposed to be as much the victim of a false system as those who suffer at his hands and who therefore seek to change or end the system. There is no quarrel with individuals as such. The quarrel is with systems, that have degenerated through lapse of time and the perverted actions of generations of men and women. The present holders of power perhaps could have scarcely avoided having it. If we ourselves were in their position we would have in all probability acted even as they act constrained by a bad system.

Communism, however, goes the other way about. It brings out differences, accentuates and emphasises them. It ignores whatever common sentiment and culture exist in among ancient communities. With its belief in the efficacy of hate and violence to bring about a new and more equitable world order, it has managed to create warring groups in each country. Common points and common objectives are minimised and even ignored. Then, it acts like a bad neighbour, who knowing the fundamental differences between the sexes, economic, social and intellectual, would emphasise them, and thus would foment family quarrels, on the plea that the differences are not of his creation but have always existed in the family. A good neighbour does otherwise. He discovers for the husband and wife the mutual points of contact the common interests of the family and counsels patience

co-operation and good understanding. Bolshevism today instead of acting the good, acts the bad neighbour.

In india for example, what would one think of a person or a group that exploits the undoubted conflict that exists between the two major communities, the Hindus and the Muslims? The conflict has been there, in some form or the other, through the centuries. It is not factual thinking to believe that fundamental and irreconcilable differences are only economic. All differences that excite the passions of people are real differences, as long as they last. They may not be ignored. They have got to be tackled and adjusted. In India we would not give credit for patriotism, much less for humanity, to a person who goes about accentuating and emphasising the Hindu-Muslim differences. We would consider one who thought that these differences could only be adjusted by violence and war to the knife, either as a dangerous maniac or a public enemy. Unfortunately for India such maniacs and public enemies exist in our midst and call themselves realists, for they recognise existing animosities and try to accentuate them and feel that such accentuation would bring about ultimate peace. Communism even where people are managing to live more or less peacefully, discovers for them what they have so far failed to discover, their fundamental and irreconcilable differences, conflicts and animosities. It is said that this is done to draw attention to injustice and wrong, bring about a violent conflict and adjust the balance. A reformer too rouses the conscience of the oppressed to their wrongs and tries to work out a just and equitable arrangement; but he employs methods of concord, peace and love. Bolshevism that seeks to reform humanity has discovered a novel way of reconciling inter-group differences namely by violence and class war.

## ITS RESULTS

'By their fruit ye shall know them.' Whatever Bolshevism may have done to solve the economic problem, the problem of peace is as far from solution as ever before. In addition to international war it has added internal conflict. The conflict is kept alive by the incessant preaching of jealousy and hate. As Bolshevism succeeds the internal conflicts are likely to become more sanguine and ruthless than the existing international conflicts. In Russia itself what has been the result? Having destroyed its real or supposed enemy the bourgeoisie, the revolution is swallowing up its own children, nay its own creators and progenitors. To-day the war to the knife is not with opponents but with those of the same faith. A bourgeois may escape the wrath of the marxists but not a fellow marxist who differs. Bolshevik Russia to-day is at peace with imperialist and robber nations. But it tolerates no heterodoxy among its own ranks. It is just as it used to be under the medieval Christian Church. Orthodoxy is prescribed by those who happen to be in power for the time being. Anybody who differs from them in the interpretation of the true doctrine is an apostate and an heretic, worthy of the torture and the stake. Many genuinely Christian saints in the middle ages, for their views had to pay with their lives even though their views were more in accord with their Master than those of their persecutors. This was because these saints did not happen to be in power in the church. To-day Bolshevism behaves in the same way. Genuine Marxists, communists and Bolsheviks have to pay for their faith with their blood.

The trials staged in recent years remind one of the methods of the Inquisition. The last moment retractions

## Non-Violent Revolution

and confessions bring most vividly to memory the Inquisitorial Courts. They remind us of the trials and the burnings of witches and heretics. The Church tolerated the Jew and the Mohammedan but showed no mercy to the Christian saint, who failed to conform to the prescribed orthodoxy. The greatest sin was to derive one's light from the Bible with one's own unaided faith and intelligence. All light must be received through the only True Church. To day the new bible of communism must be interpreted by the living representatives of the new faith in Russia. And who can be better representatives than the holders of power? Have they not succeeded? How could they have, if they had not understood and interpreted the doctrine correctly!

In international politics Russia's diplomacy has been in recent years more complicated and enigmatic than that of the capitalist countries. It is as subtle, secret and opportunist. It began by declaring war with the league of robbers. To-day it swears by the League even more than the imperialist powers. Russia began by declaring that only through war was there any chance for the world proletariat. To-day it believes in peace and organises peace demonstrations. It ought to know that peace today can only be on the existing conditions, which will keep the imperialist nations in possession of their ill-begotten gains. Peace can only maintain the present iniquitous *status quo*. But peace to-day is badly needed by Russia to strengthen its economic system and perfect its instruments of war and destruction. Peace therefore must be good for all. Every communist must swear by it as vehemently as he swore by war before. Anybody who does not fall in line with this new view is a heretic. Russians discovered that war will mean death to its



present national regime and policy. So it denounces war which was held before this as the greatest opportunity for the world proletariat. Russia is piling up weapons of war with a zest and rapidity which may well evoke the jealousy of the exploiting capitalist countries. It believes, even as capitalist countries pretend to believe, that only war will end war. While other countries pile up arms for exploitation, Russia piles them up for world peace. This reasoning is on a par with the logic of the Allied nations during the Great War.\* They fought Germany to establish peace and democracy and to put an end to war. To-day the capitalist nations are piling up arms just to bring about disarmament. Russia does likewise. But the faithful tell us that the two things are not the same. There is a difference. Russia piles up arms for peace and self-defence. The rest of the world does it for purposes of aggression and exploitation. We are afraid the difference can be seen only by the faithful. To the uninitiated there appears to be little difference. But that is perhaps because they are not well-versed in the new dialectics. We believe this is the way neither to internal nor to international peace, without which there can be no further advance for humanity. Nay, war violence will ultimately oblige humanity to yield back its individual and social gains.

Bolshevism not only believes in ending international war by group violence but it also believes that any means may be employed in the service of the revolution. Nothing is sacred or sacrosanct. All things may be done and all means employed to achieve success. If the gulf between social and political morality is great as it is, it is sought to be widened by the new philosophy.

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\* This refers to World War I.

Nothing counts but success and everything must be judged from this viewpoint. Stalin has succeeded. He stands justified. Trotsky and his followers have failed. They stand condemned. Success is the only criterion to right conduct. Bolshevism wants to employ the very methods and weapons that capitalism employs. If two opponents fight with the same weapons, the one who has them sharper and employs them more extensively and ruthlessly, naturally succeeds. It is therefore no wonder that the weapons that have been hitherto employed by capitalist states are employed by Bolshevism more extensively and more thoroughly. Their bright new sheen need not blind us to their greater capacity to destroy. In every department communism wants to perfect the old methods. It tries to make its war machines more scientific and more efficient. To-day it boasts that it can successfully resist any combination of enemy nations by its own unaided military strength and organisation. Its system of espionage, within its own boundaries and in other lands, is even more thorough than that of any other country. Money is extensively and lavishly spent to create favourable atmosphere for its changing policies and ideas. Its propaganda machine is more efficient than that of the capitalist countries. It is even better than that of the fascist nations. Capitalism and fascism use individuals as fodder for the cannon; Bolshevism uses its citizens in the same way as freely and as mercilessly. Of course it believes that it sacrifices the individual to establish social justice. But every faith has believed likewise. The Church destroyed human bodies to save human souls and establish the kingdom of heaven on earth. Bolshevism destroys civil liberty, ultimately to establish it on firmer foundations. It establishes armed dictatorship and calls it the dictatorship of the proletariat. However

its advocates fail to detect the utter falseness and hypocrisy underlying all this. The real power lies not with the proletariat but with the bosses of the Bolshevik party which is as well-knit as any fascist party. To the unsophisticated the old justifications re-dressed in modern guise appear hollow, but to the faithful they are so convincing that on them they are prepared to stake their own lives and those of others.

### THE STRAIGHT NARROW PATH

Gandhiji is opposed to all this. He wants to eliminate war, not with the weapons that war employs but by peaceful means. He does not use or excuse the use of any and every means for the attainment of his end. However laudable the end may be the means must be pure. For Gandhiji the means are as important as the end; for the means affect the end. The end achieved by doubtful means is never the same, except in external form. Its inner spirit and significance is changed by the use of impure means. During the Italo-Abyssinian war, Russia in its sanctions against Italy could go only as far as the capitalist nations which were more or less anxious for Italy's victory. In removing the sanctions Russia was in as great a hurry as any other nation. For the time the war lasted Russia freely supplied oil to Italy. Why was this done? Just to increase its external trade. One cannot imagine the Indian nation under Gandhi supplying war materials to a cruelly aggressive nation. Gandhi would rather teach his countrymen to disdain such tainted profit. Many of our modern friends are surprised that Gandhi, to day when the Congress has some power, should instead of using the money provided by the drug and drink traffic for the much needed relief to the peasant and for purposes of mass education, wants to destroy this great

and increasing source of revenue. He is prepared to postpone all urgent reforms rather than carry them out with tainted money, the wages of the degradation of his people. He thinks that reform in other direction, if need be, may wait but not prohibition. For him no end however exalted can justify unjustifiable and immoral means. However in the abolition of the drink evil, economically too, perhaps he has calculated well. The Government loses only about 10 to 15 percent of what the peasant spends in liquor while with prohibition the peasant saves cent percent of what he would have wasted away. Even if it were not so and the peasant had actually economically to lose, Gandhi would still insist upon prohibition. Moralist and wise statesman that he is, he puts first things first. No lure of immediate advantage can make him deviate from the straight and narrow path. It has often been said that Gandhiji cares more for truth and non-violence than for the independence of India. This is a mis-statement. Gandhiji sees no contradiction between truth and non-violence or the freedom of India. Freedom achieved through violence and fraud would for him be freedom only in external form. Its inner spirit would be destroyed by the immoral and fraudulent means used. Real freedom can be achieved only through means that are as pure as the end is high and noble.

So far therefore as the question of inter-group morality goes Gandhian theory and practice stand upon more unassailable grounds than those of Bolshevism. His remedy for world peace viewed historically seems to be better conceived. Whether the two problems, of civilising and moralising the group and eliminating war and violence from inter-group relation, will be solved by his method nobody can yet say with certainty. All that



one is entitled to say is that the approach to the problems is the right one. It is justified by human history and human evolution. However, in this world even right methods and right efforts may fail to achieve the desired results if humanity is not prepared for reform. Success depends upon a combination of favourable circumstances. The element of chance always plays its part. Gandhi may fail even as greater men before him failed in their own time. But the failure was more apparent than real. Their efforts pushed forward humanity. It must be understood that if a principle is right and necessary for human evolution, humanity will have to adopt it even after repeated failures. If the progress made by man so far, is to be retained and extended, we feel Gandhiji's method of truth and non-violence will have to be accepted by mankind to solve the problem of group and intergroup morality. That jealousy, fraud, hate, war, violence and indifference to means, will ever solve these problems appears to be a vain hope. Whether moral means will succeed or not in bringing about a better world order, this much is certain that fraud, violence and war can never do it. The old instruments have failed in political and intergroup relations as much as they failed in individual and social relations.

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## CONGRESS AND CLASS WAR

(Open Session, Bombay, 1934)

THE Congress resolution on the subject condemns only loose talk about 'class war' and 'confiscation of property.' It does not refer to any organised party whether the Congress Socialists or any other. Organised and disciplined groups have their policies and programmes which they contemplate carrying out in their entirety only when they have the necessary power and control over the state machinery. The Congress can have nothing to say about what may be constitutionally and legally done by a new *de-facto* organised authority in the state except, that when it finds it unjust, it would offer Satyagraha. The Congress itself contemplates stupendous changes when it captures power and has the machinery of the state in its own hands. What the Congress, however, objects to is the loose, irresponsible talk of stray individuals.

Whenever there was a revolution in the past individuals and groups did not hesitate to take action against other individuals and groups on their own initiative, without bringing in the machinery of the state into action. Individual and class hatred was promoted, leading to massacres and reigns of terror. The Congress is rightly against such class hatred leading to class war. This does not mean that the Congress fails to recognise the class antagonism that exists to day and has been in existence for centuries. It has been and shall be its constant effort to eliminate any class, caste or communal antago-

nism that leads to injustice to any class, caste or community or to the nation as a whole. The Harijan, khadi and village industries programme are conceived on the recognition of this antagonism between different groups in the Indian nation. But while the Congress recognises this conflict of interest it will not accentuate it nor will it countenance an individual or a group taking to itself the right of restoring the balance and in the process taking the law in to its own hands.

The Congress also makes a distinction between a system and the individuals that are the willing or the unwilling, the conscious or the unconscious instruments of the system. While Congress will put forth its best effort to eliminate a pernicious and unjust system, it will not penalise or victimize individuals unless their actions have been inhuman, and not sanctioned by law. It will therefore set itself against all individual, unorganised wreaking of vengeance upon any person or group. Such vengeance in the past has disgraced the annals of many a glorious revolution. As the Congress creed is non-violence, it cannot but distinguish between the system and the individuals. It is pledged to lay no violent hands upon individuals except by the process of law. It must therefore discountenance from the very beginning any talk of class hatred and class war.

The case of confiscation of property stands on the same footing. The Congress has the political sense to know that, in civilised society, all life and property in the last resort must belong to the state. Both these are being constantly requisitioned by the state for supposedly social ends. Certain crimes in the state are punished with confiscation of property and even death. If the state has no power over the property and life of its citizen such punishments

will involve it in constant friction and struggle with individuals and groups. In time of war every State calls upon sections of its people to give their life for the social good. There is compulsory recruitment and compulsory service. The same is true of property. Apart from war, every State confiscates a part of private property in ordinary times in the shape of taxes. In extraordinary times it takes possession of all that it wants with or without compensation. All this, not by the name of confiscation; it is taxation, in accordance with the law of the land, carried out by an organised authority. Nobody for a moment doubts the need for such confiscation of individual property. Why, the theory is that all property is the creation of the State, and in the state of nature there is, and there can be no private property. As the State, whatever be its form, creates all private property, so in the last resort the state is its owner. This ownership usually it does not exercise in full, or directly, not because individuals have rights but because the State, to suit its own convenience and the social end, has rightly or wrongly fancied a particular system of individuals acquiring and retaining possession of material goods and rights as the one most conducive to the good of the whole. Organised States allow themselves to be even sued. In devising a particular system it may be that the objective, public good, is not best achieved. There may be better plans; but for the time that it lasts the particular State does fancy its own arrangement to be the best or at least it thinks that, though it may not be the most perfect, any change in it would be disastrous.

The definition of a State in politics is that it is internally all powerful. It may serve the purpose of the State not to exercise all this power at every moment. It



may consider it good to delegate portions of its wordly omnipotence within its territory, to individuals, groups, corporations and local bodies; but it can never in the nature of things divest itself permanently of any portion of its authority without losing its distinctive mark as a State. It would in that case cease to be the supreme group that it is within its borders. The recognition of this fact is one of the cardinal principles of the League of Nations. If it did not recognise this, no State would consent to be its member.

Congress knows as well as any other political group in India that in adjusting the economics of the future, it will have to undertake a good deal of divestment to serve the nation in conformity with the new circumstances created. The programme it has chalked out tentatively for itself in what is known as "The Fundamental Rights and Economic programme" resolution, passed at Karachi is a big programme of divestment. It may or may not make any compensation for this huge divestment. No State is bound to give compensation if it thinks that the enjoyment of any object or right has been unjust in the past or enjoyed for a sufficiently long time, to compensate all reasonable exertions spent in the acquisition of it. All this, and much more that a state is required to do for public weal, the Congress knows, it will have to do. In this it will not be deterred by any consideration of vested interests. It wants to scrutinize every bit of what is called the National debt of India, whether it was lawfully and properly debited to its account. It will similarly scrutinize every Indian vested interest whatever its nature, duration or supposed sanctity. The standard of judgement shall be the public good. The Congress, however, has never concealed its sympathies. Any interests that conflict

with the interests of the masses of India must go. The Congress has left for itself no other standard in the scheme of Swaraj contemplated by it under the guidance of Gandhi. Every interest must prove itself to be for the good of the toiling and starving millions. It is this fact that makes so many indigenous vested interests fight shy of the Congress.

While Congress believes all this, it at the same time discountenances any loose or irresponsible talk about confiscation of property. For instance it will not tolerate individual tenants or group of tenants taking possession of land. It may not tolerate, unless it wants to abrogate its good name and its claim to the guardianship of the public weal taking possession of a mill by mill labourers. All this has been done in the past in revolutions with results temporarily or permanently disastrous to the nations, to cure the evil effect of which they had to undergo years of dislocation, trouble, travail and sacrifice. The Indian nation and the Indian Congress therefore, are well advised to countenance no loose talk about confiscation. Such talk would give to the ignorant peasant and the labourer false political and economic ideas and hopes. Political and legal rights in all well regulated societies, recognise some processes by which wrongs are redressed. Redress of wrongs can never be left to individual, unorganised, chaotic and ignorant initiative. There must be a method and a system. It is because of this that the Congress has readily accepted and encouraged the idea of a Constituent Assembly.

## LEFT WING AND RIGHT WING

*( July, 1936 )*

SOME of our Socialist friends try to prove elaborately what nobody who has any experience or study, ever denies. In a sense they try to convert the faithful. All are agreed that in India there is poverty, unemployment and low purchasing power. One also cannot deny such an obvious proposition as that production could be greatly increased by the mechanisation of agriculture and industry. We may, for the sake of argument, be prepared to admit that the last can be done under a socialist regime. What, however, we would like to know is, how the desired changes are to be brought about, how we are to get the necessary power and the means to achieve the end in view. It is admitted that we have not the necessary power and the means. The question therefore, is how we are to get these. Industrialization, socialization, divestment of vested interests, increasing production with purchasing power and the elimination of poverty and unemployment are not theoretical and academic questions. They are questions in practical politics, and they cannot be solved unless we have the power and the machinery of the state in our hands. Lenin could not electrify Russia without first securing political power nor could his successors carry out industrialisation and mechanisation of agriculture without absolute and unquestioned authority.

Why, for instance, is there no natural evolution of industries in India? Wherever we turn, we find

hindrances in our way. These are not theoretical but practical. They must be removed before we can achieve anything. The obstacles in the way may roughly be classed as political, economic and social. We know, in the last resort, our economic disabilities are accentuated by our political system. We cannot economically progress to any appreciable extent unless these political disabilities are removed. Recently we have also seen that we cannot remove any great outstanding social evils without political power. Even when the nation is prepared to abolish untouchability, the law renders us no help. If we want to go "dry" the law renders us no help, but positively stands in the way. If we want to make our nation literate, the state, by its refusal to grant money for nation-building purposes, acts as a block in our path. No great reform can be carried out unless the state authority either itself undertakes it, or is at least ranged on the side of reformers. We must either generate or capture political power.

Japan had political power and in thirty years or so, not only industrialized itself but was able to throw out an effective challenge to the Western world. India began industrialization a little earlier, but what has been the net result? Census reports show that a greater percentage of the population lives upon agriculture to-day than ever before.\* Russia has been able to industrialize in fifteen years. And how futile seemed the dreams of the Russian idealists before political power became theirs!

Let us, however, examine in some detail the net results of the Indian effort at industrialization. All industries are in a precarious condition. In the present-day-division of the world into nations that are politically

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\* Refer to the section on 'Khadi and Industrialization.'



and economically at war with one another, it is impossible for any country to keep its industries going, unless it has complete control over finances, currency, tariff and foreign policy. In the absence of this, industries are bound to be in a precarious condition. On account of the world depression even such Governments as have all the necessary control over finances, currency tariff and foreign policy, find it difficult to protect their industries; how much more so in India where we have no political power! There is no normal healthy growth of Indian industries. This in spite of the fact that all indigenous enterprises have received heavy protection,—sometimes to the extent of 200 per cent and more—from the Swadeshi movement since the Partition agitation. The consumer has willingly and voluntarily borne the extra burdens in a country where the purchasing power is notoriously low. Public men have acted as the unpaid agents and advertisers of indigenous industry. Vast sums have been spent by the Congress and other public bodies to organise exhibitions and bazars. In the councils and Assemblies the cause of big industry has always been advocated and some protection got from an unwilling Government. But what has been the reward to the public or the poor of all this sacrifice and effort? The industries have not tried even to put their own house in order. Their efficiency remains the lowest in the world. They lack initiative and incentive alike. How could it be otherwise? They know they may come to grief any day with one stroke of the finance member's pen. They, therefore, therefore, seek to make hay while the sun shines—the biggest profits, by hook or by crook in the shortest time. The Government allows them to do this because it gives an equal and more than equal opportunity to the foreign capital invested here. There is no great harm if some

crumbs fall to the coloured capitalists. Only the crumbs should not be substantial enough to endanger industry in England or its foreign commercial and political relations.

The indifference of the Indian capitalists, and of the Government, to the interest of the country and of the masses, has such an evil effect that even the elementary rights of labour are not protected. Indian labour, so far as the hours of work, conditions under which the same is performed, housing arrangements, compensation for injury, pay, pension, education, medical aid and entertainment are concerned, is much behind labour elsewhere. The nation has not been able to protect it from the worst kind of exploitation—an exploitation that was known to other countries only half a century ago.

Take again the case of agriculture. The land is divided in homeopathic holdings. In most provinces the average holdings are of less than two acres. This only means that there are thousands of holdings of less than half or quarter of an acre. The sub-division is ever on the increase. There is no law in the land that can arrest it. Only a Government that could provide for the disinherited of an agriculturist family could change the law. Such provision could only be made in the fields of commerce and industry. Government knows this fully well and therefore no effort has been made to arrest the sub-division of land.

The holdings, small as they are,—are not in consolidated blocks but scattered and intermixed. What could a poor tractor do with such holdings? So the question is not one of theory, whether small holdings are more profitable or large scale production, whether peasant

proprietorship will be more helpful or land nationalization. The question is of power in the nation to effect the one or the other revolution in agriculture; for I hold that under the present conditions both will be revolutionary changes, requiring in the hands of the reformers, absolute political and economic power over the whole of India. None of these things can be done without some sort of planned economy. But to talk of planned economy without power is possible only in irresponsible conferences of theoretical economists, afraid to say the right thing, even when they know it, and yet having the desire and the vanity to look learned and up-to-date.

The first problem, therefore, in India is not a revolutionary programme of reconstruction as is implied by industrialization and socialism, but a radical programme for the capture of power. Till such power is achieved, all social and economic programmes can only be of a reformatory character.

Apart from his fads, it is some such considerations that makes Gandhiji keep before the nation things that it can do *without* the aid of state power and state machinery. His whole khadi and village programme has this political and economic background. Recently one Lord Farringdon, a Socialist Peer, visited Gandhiji. This gentleman wanted to know from him the real object of the Village Industries' Association. Gandhiji who was observing silence wrote: "To show the people how to turn waste into wealth." The questioner asked: "How do you want to tackle the problem of rural indebtedness?" The reply was: "That, we are not dealing with. It requires state effort. I am just now discovering things people can do without state effort. Not that I do not want state aid. But I know I cannot get it on my terms."

This in a few expressive words reveals the whole economic basis of Gandhiji's programme. He was talking to a socialist who perhaps would not have understood his usual, spiritual language or his ideas of simplicity and voluntary poverty. So he talked in plain political and economic language that a foreigner could understand. No economist worth the name can have any quarrel with utilizing the waste of the nation and turning it into the wealth. In the same interview he also said that there was no other constructive programme before the nation.

Under the present political arrangement, I believe there can be no revolutionary constructive programme. It will all have to be reformatory, "utilizing the waste" of the nation. It can only do very moderate things and that too, modestly. It is this fact that has made the socialists adumbrate no constructive programme. They tell us of their aims and what they stand for—nationalization of all instruments of production; which only means that all economic activity, whether of production, exchange or consumption, will have to be regulated by the state, and a state necessarily managed by the producers, that is, the proletariat, in their own interest. Before this is done the proletariat or some body or some party on their behalf, must first capture power. These are the aims and objects of scientific socialism. The Communists, therefore, do not countenance the work of the Trade Unionists. They hold that it is reformatory in character, concerned with the minor disabilities of the workers. Sometimes they tolerate it, because they consider such a work as prelude to strikes, which gives the necessary training to the masses for the final class war. Mostly they denounce such trade union activity which, they think, by making labour a little more comfortable, dulls



the edge of discontent and postpones the day of reckoning, the day of revolution.

The scientific socialists know that when industry is in depression no strike can succeed. The owners sometimes welcome it. They even engineer it. Yet the socialists, even under such circumstances when the industries are in depression, do not mind encouraging a strike, knowing full well that it will end in failure, causing untold misery and suffering. They think, however, that this misery and this suffering are inevitable. The price has got to be paid. Individuals can only be the means in themselves. The masses have ever been fodder for the cannon of the capitalists and the imperialists. They will at least be better paid in their future generations if they become the fodder in the cause of the revolution.

On the other hand, a genuine trade unionist calculates the chances of success. He does not want the poor to be mere instruments. He feels individuals have also a life beyond the group. Their sufferings and sorrows as individuals are real. Their life, however humble, is an end in itself. He lies low if he sees no chance of success. For him a strike is a means for a reformatory change in the conditions of labour. He does not indulge in it as so much gymnastics preparing for the final struggle, the final war to the knife between the classes, which will establish a classless society.

The scientific socialist, therefore, cannot possibly do any constructive work among the city proletariat unless he modifies, or for the time being suspends for practical considerations, the rigour of his theory. If he cannot engage in any constructive work in the city, much less can he do so in the village. He would be lost in the village

problems. They are so tiny, so local, that with his world vision he will find it difficult, if not useless, to work for their solution. He will find only in aeons, if ever, such a reformatory effort will produce conditions suitable for a revolution. He would throw up the sponge in sheer disgust. Here, therefore his work can only be, to organise demonstrations. These demonstrations must necessarily be periodical. As soon as the agricultural season begins, he will find that no revolutionary ardour of his, no picture of the millennium of a classless society to come, will induce the villager to leave his plough and his sickle. Such seasonal demonstrations will have to be, if they are to be on a big scale,—and demonstrations would lose all their virtue and effect if they were not on a big scale—few and far between. The village proletariat, when it assembles for a meeting of a demonstration, say, 50,000 strong, must disperse before 3 p. m. They all come on foot. They disperse in time to their homes before nightfall. There can be no catering for a crowd of 10,000, much less of 50,000 in any village, even for a day. These crowds can therefore be spasmodic, having very little cohesion and serving no useful purpose for any constructive effort. They can have only some limited propagandist and demonstrative value. They may, when excited, burst forth and produce a show of revolution. But such peasant risings have always been drowned in blood.

The sole function of the scientific socialist, whether in the city or in the village, can only be propaganda, demonstration and preaching of the socialist ideology. Preaching can only be fruitfully done by select and chosen intellectuals. If put in the hands of all and sundry, if put in the hands of the city and village volunteer, it would only teach one superstition in place of another, and one

fanaticism for another. All talk of scientific socialism would thus go by the board.

What then are the rank and file of the socialists to do? This problem of the rank and file of the army is solved by Gandhiji. He effectively provides for the employment of the politically unemployed. His constructive programmes give scope not only to the leaders but to the humblest of his followers. All are provided with some wages in keeping with the voluntary contributions received from a poor people. They live a neat, simple and clean life. They need never be out of work.

For the capture of power Gandhiji has a radical programme, as radical as any red revolutionary; only it is non-violent. It is not my purpose here to go into the philosophy, or even into the practical value, situated as we are to-day, of non-violence. The latter has been recognised by a section of the socialists. The question is not whether this or that theory is right or wrong; that only the historian of the future or a prophet of the present can settle, and I claim to be neither. The question is whether the new method of non-co-operation is direct action and, as such, revolutionary, as distinguished from constitutional action. I believe it is direct action and it is revolutionary. Non-cooperation is, as some have called it, an open conspiracy. I would say that it is a non-violent, open conspiracy. In ultimate analysis, Gandhiji has a programme which is revolutionary for the capture of political power, and reformatory for constructive work.

It is this double aspect of Gandhiji's movement that makes the political phrase, as used in the West, of the Right and Left Wing, lose most of its significance, when applied to Congress politics. Politicians who may be

considered as belonging to the Right, when their activities are viewed from the conservative tendencies of the constructive programme, come to belong to the Left, when the movement of direct action is on; those who belong by their ideology to the Left wing, sometimes fail to show their Left wing tendencies when the battle is on. This was clear at the conference at Poona in 1933 when Gandhiji's followers were for the continuance of the 1932 Movement, while many socialists advocated its suspension. It is also because of this, that socialists have not been able to dislodge Gandhiji's followers from their position of power in the Congress, and of affection in the hearts of the people. There are among them tried and seasoned soldiers, who have given good account of themselves in constructive work, in flood, in famine, in earthquake or any calamity that has befallen their people and also, when the occasion has arisen, given determined battle to the Government. When the battle is on, Gandhiji, their leader, appears to be the greatest and the most uncompromising revolutionary. He is the one in whom the idea of personal safety is least present. I could mention other names, but I may not. The intelligent reader can think for himself.

It is also common knowledge that Gandhiji and his followers do not want to lose touch with other groups, even though politically such groups come nowhere near direct action. Moderates, capitalists, reformers of any party or community, are all asked to join the movement against Untouchability, of Hindi-prachar, Khadi, Village Industries and Village Reconstruction. There is still another point from which the co-operation of other political and semi-political groups and classes is sought for by the Congress and by Gandhiji. Antagonistic groups and



classes in India have one thing in common. They all suffer from the stunting and dwarfing effects of a foreign Government. It is not only the masses,—if it were so, the politicians would come from the masses exclusively. True, the masses physically suffer more. But the greater suffering falls to the lot of the most sensitive, and these are found in all classes and in all communities. Their pride in their country in their culture, nay in their respective religions is wounded. A national movement should harness all these forces and focus them to one centre and one objective, that is, the achieving of national political liberty. The national sentiment, embedded as it is, in the present psychology of the peoples, is not yet such a worn-out factor as would render the joining of differing groups in its service, impossible. Even Russian communists are not altogether without nationalism\* though some of our budding socialists seem to be ashamed to own it.

National and democratic movements the world over, show how different elements combined in other countries for a common objective. In Holland, England, America, Italy, France and even Russia, the whole nation rose as one man to throw off the native or the foreign yoke. True, the share of the masses, their sufferings and sacrifices, were the greatest, though not always did powers fall into their hands. In the earlier revolutions power fell in the hands of a rich powerful middle class, considered than to be the natural leaders of the masses. In France there was an attempt to attach to the masses the power newly wrested from the king and the lords, but it failed, owing to the better ability, leadership and organization of the middle class. Even in Russia, after the overthrow of the Czar, power fell into the hands of

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\* World War II has proved this to hilt.

the middle group which, however, was not efficiently organised and vital to retain it for long. It also lacked the necessary leadership. The Bolsheviks, with a better knit organisation, with greater push and drive, with a fuller knowledge of what they wanted, and above all with wise leadership, were soon able to carry through a second revolution which put them in power as guardians of the proletariat. In the first Revolution that overthrew the Czar and the Russian bureaucracy, the Bolsheviks did not stand apart; they too joined hands with all those who desired and worked for the overthrow of the old order. What happens at critical times in England? Whenever the nation is in grip of a crisis the political genius of the British evolves a National Government. The diverse groups are for the time forgotten. In all revolutions the progressive and effective elements of the nation join hands. The victory goes to that group which is the most prepared and the most organized and which above all has evolved the right kind of leadership; for in critical times much depends upon leadership.

Take the alternative where each group suspects the other and wants to keep itself pure and uncontaminated. Take the socialist group. It says the zamindar and the capitalist will never join the struggle for freedom. They will, in the last resort, back out because they will feel that their peculiar rights could only be supported by a foreign Government. If this is so, it holds true of the upper middle class also. It holds true of the lawyer, professor, doctor and others of the learned professions. The lower middle class is always doubtful material, as has been proved in Italy and Germany. The peasant proprietors, if they knew the full implications of the socialist programme,—the nationalization of land along

with the other instruments of production, would be the greatest stumbling block. The communalists, be they Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs, will of course hold out. By this process of elimination—if whole classes are supposed to be homogenous, organized and disciplined groups, and are guided by one and only one consideration, the advancement of their own class or sectional interests and that in a narrow sense—the whole vast population of India will be eliminated. What will remain will be a few chosen people, the Iron-sides. These must conquer, for they represent the only true idea, the idea that is going to conquer the world in the near future! Such faith and fervour bordering on religious frenzy and fanaticism, can be understood in the followers of a Christ or a Mahomed, or even of a Gandhi. But in scientific socialism, wedded to objective facts, such frenzy would imply that the new faith of socialism is only another religion without a god. It will have its new frenzy, its fervour, and, above all, its fanaticism. All this, I know, will be repudiated in the name of their theory as recorded in their books. But, in practice, it is no whit better than any of the older faiths, with like potencies of narrowness, formalism, bigotry, and the arrogance of the chosen people, destined not to inherit heaven but this earth, and destined also to throw into the pit all the unfaithful, to be there for all time to come. Such a faith will oppress, suppress, even as the old faiths did, only with less sanctity for human life and with keener and more scientific weapons and a better organization. It will not have the saving grace of Gandhiji's truth and non-violence. If new fanaticisms must arise, it would be better for humanity that they be at least non-violent.

I have stated in brief, the position and merits of the

Gandhian scheme of political and social reconstruction, as contra-distinguished from socialism. I have not discussed the theory of non-violence nor any of the far reaching implications of the Gandhian programme. That would be going beyond the limits of the present controversy.

## XI

# CONGRESS AND SOCIALISM

(*July, 1936*)

WE are rebuked and told that "Socialism, as every school boy ought to know, is an economic theory which endeavours to understand and solve the problems that afflict the world."\* A school boy may however know the definition, without realizing the full implication of these innocent looking words. The definition means one of two things: either (1) all problems that afflict this little world of ours are economic and arise purely out of economic relations or (2) there are human problems which, though more or less affected by our economic relations, transcend these and stand comparatively apart and demand other than purely economic remedies.

In the first case, all human relations are, directly or indirectly, the result of the economic structure of Society. All values, physical, intellectual, moral and artistic, not to talk of cultural and spiritual, are determined by economic forces. If this is so, socialism

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*Note.*—The quotations in this article are taken from Pandit Jawaharlal's article on this subject written in 1936.



ceases to be a purely economic theory but becomes a philosophic system of thought and action concerned with all life and the whole of it. As such, it must seek to revalue fundamental values held heretofore by humanity. In the other case, if it is considered that the problems afflicting the world are neither purely nor preponderatingly economic, socialism becomes only an economic theory. It concerns itself with part of human life and activity, may be, an important part, having repercussions in other allied fields. It cannot claim to be a philosophy of life nor can it remedy all the ills that afflict the world. Fundamental values need not in that case change or be appreciably affected except by an evolutionary, imperceptible process.

What an earnest inquirer would, therefore, like to know, to clarify thought and make action rational, is; which of these two points of view a particular socialist holds. If this is not made clear there is likely to be confusion. A socialist then cannot complain if his brand of socialism is confused with some other variety of it.

If, however, a theory claims to solve the problems that afflict the world without the qualifying adjective of 'some' or again, if it aims at 'social reconstruction', and further, if its "approach is Marxian" and calls itself by the well defined and well recognised term "scientific", the only natural conclusion is that not only what orthodoxy considers purely or predominantly economic values but all values and all life are in the crucible. The whole of human life is under examination, and a new earth and a new heaven on earth (of course in the historical future) is sought to be created. This exactly is the claim put forward by and on behalf of the Bolshevics. They have revolutionised every field of human thought

and activity. Personal and family relations, the breeding and upbringing of children, pedagogy and education, arts and sciences, literature and philosophy, ethics and psychology, social, political and economic ideas and relations, all changed. It is a complete reversal not only of the old order but of all the old values. A new human mind with a brand new psychology is in the process of making, if not already fashioned.

If all this that is claimed for scientific socialism, is true, it is no wonder, that some whose faith in the old values is not as yet altogether destroyed, get apprehensive. They are apprehensive not at the passing mention but at the powerful advocacy by which socialism and a particular variety of it is repeatedly kept before the country, as the only possible remedy for the ills that afflict humanity. Nay, it is said that it is imposed upon us by historical necessity, and those who do not recognise the need and the urgency of it are conservative and reactionary.

There is however, little doubt that many of those who in India and elsewhere attack socialism, are socially and politically reactionary. They are the conscious or unconscious, the paid or unpaid agent of vested interests. They are not only against socialism but against all reform, however introduced, that seeks to render any degree of justice to the disinherited of the earth.

But to confound these two groups of critics is to confound the reformer with the reactionary, the friend with the foe. This confusion may needlessly weaken the ranks of those fighting for justice and liberty. In a national struggle, such a policy would only strengthen the foreigner. It will fail to combine all the anti-imperial forces in the country. It is of course assumed,

that for purposes of effective national union and action, imperialism and capitalism are kept apart. If however, this distinction is obliterated, phrases like "common front," "combining all anti-imperial forces," "Political independence which alone can be our first and foremost concern," would lose all meaning. The national struggle in that case will merge in the class struggle. On one side will be the proletariat of India, on the other the British nation and all those classes of Indians, who unfortunately neither are of the proletariat nor are de-classed, but who in spite of these handicaps, are prepared to struggle and sacrifice to free the country from the foreign yoke and render justice to the masses. This necessary distinction for purposes of the national struggle is often forgotten by the socialist friends. If they admit it in words, they forget it in action. Some of them have brought amendments to the Congress Constitution, declaring the Congress goal to be the proletarian rule.

This point therefore needs to be cleared. It needs clearing both for the non-socialist Congressmen and for those who call themselves socialists. The clarification is the more necessary in the interests of the latter, as they always consider imperialism synonymous with capitalism, and thus confuse the straight issue of national independence with class struggle and class war. In India every Indian by reason of his colour and nationality is a slave, whether he be prince or beggar, zamindar or tenant, capitalist or labourer. The only free are those who are struggling to free the country.

"To some extent the premises are accepted by the most ardent socialist, for he admits that political freedom is the first essential objective for us to-day. Everything else must follow it." The most ardent socialist admits, all

this, but alas in theory. In practice "the way of looking even at this common objective is not the same." Practical difficulties must arise, and they do arise. Unless, therefore, some method is found either of eliminating or minimising the effect of these difficulties, we are bound to be ineffective, being engaged mostly in criticising each other's thought and action.

There appear to be but two ways of avoiding this conflict in practice. Either (1) The first must be put first and no overemphasis placed on the distant and the distinctive. All emphasis must be put on the common measure of agreement; or (2) Concrete items of work which could be carried out in co-operation with each other be found or evolved. If we are to accomplish our political emancipation in any measurable time, no third alternative suggests itself. In the absence of any of these, work is bound to suffer, and not only the political but the social goal in favour of which the risk of division is sought to be taken, will grow distant. If the programme of the parties entirely or even mainly consists of creating different ideologies, there is bound to be clash. Whether this division will be to the advantage of the nation or otherwise is a matter which can neither be decided *a priori* nor even entirely from past examples. Past examples are so much embedded in local circumstances of the time, that any generalization may lead astray. In politics a hasty or a wrong generalization may involve a set-back spelling misery and ruin to thousands. It may not stand in the way of the ultimate achievement of goal but it may dangerously retard our progress.

He will be a bold man, who would say that the nationalist ranks dividing themselves in rival camps of the moderates and the extremists in 1908, was good for



the parties or for the country as a whole! It made the moderates ineffective. The extremists were suppressed with the public opinion of their political rivals at the back of the Government. The Country was disorganized. Only one party gained by this premature and ill-conceived break, and that was the bureaucracy. Any split at the present juncture is more likely to have similar results, rather than those that followed the imperceptible division at the time of the Home Rule agitation or the break up of parties after the inauguration of the C. D. movement. Time, place, circumstances, our forces and the enemy's forces are, therefore, to be carefully considered and measured before any step is taken to force issues that are likely to divide nationalist groups. We hope, there will be no occasion for the so called right and left wings of the Congress to divide, but if and when the occasion arrives, all the relevant factors and the respective strength and the position of the parties in the provinces, and in the country in general, will be considered before a rupture is forced. If the rival groups consider that they cannot do without each other, and only in their union lies their and the country's strength they will have the political sagacity to evolve programmes of work and policies of action that will minimise friction. Efforts should ever be made to bridge over even natural and inevitable divisions, born of different temperaments and ideologies. Any other way will be the way to political disaster and suicide.

“ It is clear that we must concentrate on the political issue, the independence of India. That is of fundamental and primary importance for us, and any ideology which blurs the issue is undesirable, and not to be encouraged. ....Why then this talk of Socialism.... The Socialist

outlook helps in the political struggle ... It makes us realize what the real political content (apart from the social content) of freedom must be."

True, the socialist outlook makes us realise the political content of freedom. But it may humbly be pointed out that this outlook is not the same thing as socialism. It does not claim to solve all problems. It is influenced by socialism, but it does not style itself scientific socialism nor is it necessarily Marxian. The impetus to it might have been given by Marx and his companions, it might have been based upon scientific sociological, and economic study but it is not socialism of any variety. It is reformatory. It does not claim to regulate the whole life of an individual or a group. It merely gives a turn primarily, and preponderatingly, to the economic relations of individuals. As such, it has been adopted even by some of conservative groups and governments. If all that is wanted is this socialist outlook, I submit, it is already there in the Congress policies and programmes. For this purpose it is quite sufficient to quote the concluding portion of Gandhiji's speech<sup>1</sup> at the R. T. C. or to mention the resolution<sup>2</sup> of the summer of

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1 "Above all the Congress represents in its essence the dumb semi-starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of the land in its 700,000 villages, no matter whether they come from British India or what is called Indian India. Every interest, which in the opinion of the Congress is worthy of protection, has to subserve the interests of these millions; and so you find now and again apparently a clash between several interests. And if there is a real genuine clash I have no hesitation in saying on behalf of the Congress, that the Congress will sacrifice any interest for the sake of the interests of these dumb millions."

2 "In the opinion of the Committee the great poverty and misery of the Indian people are due not only to the foreign exploitation of

1929 passed in Bompay by the meeting of the A. I. C. C. If "few Socialists could improve on the general declaration of policy and outlook" why try to confuse issues bringing in terms, whose import and meaning are wider than what the Congress has ever contemplated? Why depress friends and colleagues in the national struggle, who have not yet taken a plunge and become definitely socialists? Or why on the other hand give handle to enemies, who are ready to exploit our language for their own nefarious purposes of suppression and repression.

The resolution of 1929 talks of only such "revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structure "as would" remove the gross inequalities". By passing this resolution "it would be absurd to say that Congress had gone Socialist." This is perfectly true. But if it is so, Socialism must be something different in its quantitative and qualitative contents. It is this Socialism that is likely to create divisions in our ranks and take away that concentration on the political issue for which the Congress and Gandhiji have stood all along. This does not imply any appraisal of Socialism. It only means that the Congress for the time being, has advocated some of the concrete proposals and reforms that have come to be called Socialistic, but it has nothing to do with Socialism as such. Its main effort and therefore its emphasis to-day is on the political issue. It does not neglect economic reform. But it has not

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India but also to the economic structure of society which alien rulers support so that their exploitation may continue. Therefore to remove this poverty and misery and to ameliorate the condition of the Indian masses it is essential to make revolutionary changes in the economic and social structure of society and remove the gross inequalities."

accepted the Socialist doctrines governing economic life. What the Congress will do after the political struggle is fought and won has also been indicated by the Congress—The Constituent Assembly.

“Socialist outlook stresses (what Congress has been emphasizing in varying degrees during these past fifteen years) that we must stand for the masses and that our struggle should be of the masses.” Now if this is the object, would it not be a better course, at least for principal leaders in the Congress, to emphasize what the Congress has stood for, for the last fifteen years in the words of the Congress itself, especially when the words used in some of its resolutions are unambiguous? Why put in phrases and terms, which, not to talk of school boys, even some of the veteran Congress leaders fail to understand? Surely this is not the way to combine all anti-imperialist forces in the country!!

“Dr. Bhagwandas with a most commendable persistence has been demanding for many years that Swaraj should be defined. I do not agree with him in some of his views, but I do agree with him that we cannot go on talking vaguely about Swaraj without indicating, however roughly, what kind of Swaraj we are aiming at.” There is evidently a difference of opinion about the definition of Swaraj between two great men. Is it not quite possible, that any rigid definition at this stage of our struggle, may involve us in needless, unprofitable, and subtle philosophic discussions about the future, which we can but dimly envisage? Dr. Bhagwandas raised this question at the time of the C. D. movement of 1921. If at that time, there had been a general discussion, there would have been a sharp difference of opinion about the content of Swaraj, not only between Jawaharlalji and Dr. Bhagwandas, who both



were participators in the struggle, but lesser luminaries without much understanding of the problem, would have joined the fray. The C. D. movement might have had in that case to wait. It was, I believe, some such consideration that made Gandhiji and other prominent leaders including Jawaharlalji refrain from responding to the very "commendable to persistence of Dr. Bhagwandas". I believe at this stage of our struggle, we can give but a rough idea of the content of liberty, and I claim; and it is admitted, that the Congress has done this often enough. As late as 1934 and as soon as the Congress was allowed to function as a lawful association after the last struggle, in one of its resolutions reiterating its determination to win 'Purna Swaraj,' the Working Committee laid down "Congress is nothing if it does not progressively represent and serve the masses." So far as a rough indication goes, it is there and words which none can mistake or misunderstand.

Then, is the content of the word Socialism any less vague than the content of the many Congress resolutions on the subject, including the famous Karachi resolution about the "Fundamental Rights and Economic programme?" If in place of these resolutions the Congress were to use the comprehensive term Socialism as some of our friends would wish, the fight will yet continue. What kind of Socialism? Even the Marxian variety has different shades and each self-styled orthodox Marxian calls the other if he disagrees with him, bourgeois, reactionary, anti-revolutionary. I think the phrases used will be different, but the fight will continue. There will ever be a demand for a more definite, and more unambiguous declaration, of the content of the Congress goal of Swaraj. Put it as 'Purna Swaraj,' and the cry will be

why not explicitly state severance of British connection! Put it as severance from the British, the cry will be why not enmity with England! Put that, and the new cry may be, let us rule over and exploit England for as long as it has ruled over and exploited India. Such a process can have no end specially among the Indians who are proverbially so metaphysical.

One need not question the greatness of Marx or the superiority of his method of approach to history, for the investigation of social phenomena. We may admire Marx and his life work, without accepting all his conclusions. Science is a process or a method of arriving at truth, as also the results or conclusion of that process. One may agree that a particular process or method of investigation is correct without wholly accepting the conclusions which a particular investigator might have arrived at by his investigation. This is true in physical sciences. But it is much more true in social sciences, where the field of investigation is immensely wider, and experiments can neither be made nor multiplied at the will of the investigator, and the disturbing and special causes innumerable. Newton and Einstein, both used the same scientific method and yet their conclusions, how far apart! This does not falsify the method. It only illustrates the limits that time, circumstances and the state of human knowledge impose upon the investigator. If this is so with exact sciences, how much more so will it be, with the social sciences which deal with human material endowed perhaps with free will.

Many prophets and reformers in the past, made revolutionary contributions to the thought of their generations. It does not take away a bit from their credit and greatness, that some of their most vital doctrines, about

which they and their followers had no doubts and for the defence of which their followers were not only prepared to cut other people's throats, but also to lay down their own lives as willing offerings, in the service of the Truth, are accepted to-day not only by humanity, but even by their later followers, in extremely modified forms. So to recognise the greatness of Marx and Lenin, it is not necessary for the thoughtful to accept all their partial conclusions. We can admire without being converted. The field of knowledge and investigation has not come to a sudden end. With every new investigation this field has naturally been broadening. Fanaticism is to be deprecated as much in politics as in religion, more so in politics because of the lack of restraining influences, which, religion with its humility and self-surrender, sometimes imposes upon its votaries.

*PART III*

THE SYNTHESIS





## XII

# SPIRITUALITY AND THE CONGRESS

(*July, 1937*)

QUACK doctors when they have given a name to a disease think they have diagonalised it. Pseudo scientists likewise think they have explained a phenomenon when they have given it a name. There are some political individuals and parties who indulge in similar uncritical attitude, when passing judgment upon political and economic policies and programmes. Instead of proving or disproving the wisdom, utility, and practicability of a particular policy or programme they use certain adjectives, and feel they have effectively disposed of the question. Call a policy revolutionary, and you have proved it to be scientific, based upon undisputed facts, dictated by historical necessity, and therefore bound to succeed, if not immediately, then in the near future, if you have only the necessary faith and patience. Call the policy of your opponents as reformatory, romantic revivalist and reactionary, and you have no further need for proof or analysis. Straightway you have demonstrated that the policy is neither based upon facts nor is scientific, nor dictated by historical necessity. It is therefore bound to fail. If it appears to succeed that is only a delusion and a snare.

Often the official Congress policies and programmes have been dubbed by those not in agreement with them as medieval, revivalist and reformatory. The critics have described their own policies or even the absence of them,

as revolutionary. Something like this was done recently by Comrade Roy, in his presidential speech to the Youth Conference at Sitapur. The word 'reformatory' having perhaps by now lost its freshness and charm the new word that found favour with him is 'spiritual.' The Congress ideology is 'spiritual.' No further analysis or proof is necessary. By using the word 'spiritual' the speaker thinks he has effectively demotivated the ideology and policies put under this title. It is understood that if they are spiritual they are politically reactionary. Now it is difficult to know the exact connotation of the word "spiritual." For the fanatic Hindu or Muslim it may mean, cow-worship, cow-slaughter and music before mosque. For the ignorant it may stand for any conception however rude, crude or material, For the savant and the mystic, it may be a body of philosophic and psychic truths perceived through external and finer experience.

One is therefore, at a loss to understand a critic, who thinks he has effectively demolished a theory or a programme when he calls it spiritual. Does the critic mean by the word 'spiritual,' unpractical and unscientific? But spirituality is not always unpractical. Sometimes it is and has been very disastrously practical. Nor has religion always been unscientific. There was a time when the priest was the repository of all the science that there was in the world. Therefore it is always best to use terms of exact connotations, when criticising plans and policies of a responsible organisation claiming the allegiance of millions of people. Even if the term 'spiritual' were not vague, a policy can be spiritual without being economically and politically reactionary or bad. In the past spiritual policies have not been always politically bad. Therefore, not for a moment admitting that

spiritual policies are necessarily bad politically, we may examine how much of pure spirituality there is in Congress aims, methods, programmes and personalities.

The Congress goal broadening with time, has always remained political and economic. In the beginning the Congress specifically excluded religious and social reform from its purview. To-day, the 'Purna Swaraj' that the Congress wants, has little to do with any spiritual or individual self-control, self-mastery, or self-realization. It merely lays down the political aim of India as an independent national entity. The Congress goal as laid down in the constitution is attainment of complete independence.

The means of the Congress have also been changing and broadening. The Congress began with prayer, petition, protest, and constitutional agitation. To-day it has added a new weapon to its armoury—the weapon of satyagraha or non-co-operation. Again the satyagraha that it has accepted, is neither confined to the individual, nor is it spiritual. It is political, economic and collective. The word satyagraha, as the word Swaraj, has a spiritual derivation, but as accepted by the Congress for the Indian nation it is not a weapon for the spiritual salvation or self-realisation of the individual. It is direct action of a non-violent type for the redress of political and economic wrongs. It eschews violence in politics on moral and practical grounds. Personal non-violence is a psychological rather than a physical or external concept. Group non-violence does not exclude individual non-violence. But the two do not always coincide. In individual conduct the essence of human action lies in the psychic motive and the spring of action and not merely in the physical manifestation or its results, in time and space. In group conduct, while motive is important, the main



emphasis is upon external action, creative of external consequences. Individual non-violence takes many and various forms, differing from individual to individual, religion, and community to community. The average Muslim and Christian do not think non-vegetarian diet is inconsistent with non-violence. The average Hindu considers it otherwise. A Jain goes still further. All such various types and expressions of non-violence find no place in satyagraha as accepted by the Congress. All that it expects is that Congressman use no external violence for the achievement of their political and economic goal. If sometimes emphasis has been laid on the psychological aspect it is on practical grounds. The idea is that those observing non-violence in thought and word, are less likely to fail at critical moments in fulfilling their external and group obligations. Whatever may be the historical origin of non-violence the Congress has accepted only the external physical and collective aspect of it. Efforts to make the Congress accept any other have ever failed. Rightly or wrongly the Congress has refused to substitute "non-violent" for "peaceful" and "truthful" for legitimate means, because it has rightly felt that non-violence and "truth" have a wider connotation than the latter. The word "non-violent" has also a more individual and spiritual implication.

Another element of Satyagraha as conceived by Gandhiji is truth. But the Congress has refused to accept or use this word. It has contented itself with the more modest and less ambitious expression "legitimate." So the means, by which the Congress proposes to achieve its ends, whether as before constitutional or as now 'legitimate and peaceful,' are all political. They have very little to do with any spiritual, religious or individual effort

or idea. Of course, the weapons are such that they can be used by individuals, morally and spiritually inclined. This instead of taking away from their efficiency adds to it. The word as it is to-day, has not discarded everything that smacks of spiritual values. Much less is it so in India. The general human mind with the exception of a few groups here and there, does not discard a political weapon simply because it also is a spiritual weapon useful for personal aims. That the Congress creed, "peaceful," is accepted by even group of Indian Socialists, clearly proves that the non-violence to which the Congress is pledged is of a political variety. Its "legitimate" means exclude only narrow diplomacy and opportunist and Machiavellian tactics. These are excluded from any wise, farseeing, fundamental statesmanship. History records of no instance where major problems of a nation were solved for long by crooked diplomacy and opportunism. For a slave people any use of such methods would instead of raising the moral character of the nation would lower them. Therefore, apart from any spiritual, purely on political and practical grounds these methods are rightly eschewed by the Congress. In a country suffering from slavery for centuries, every political and economic programme inevitably raises the moral backbone of the nation and the individuals. But that does not make the programme spiritual in any narrow sectarian or formal sense. Congress also does not believe in the convenient theory that "The end justifies the means." But this idea can scarcely make it spiritual. Many spiritual sects have held, and do hold such doctrines. But the Congress, not on any spiritual but on moral, practical utilitarian grounds, has rejected the convenient theory productive of fanaticism, cruelty, bloodshed and destruction in the world. Congress methods of work are not anti-moral.

When they are not a-moral, they are ethical. Ethics is mainly concerned with just, right and brotherly conduct between neighbours. Neighbour includes the opponent and the criminal. Ethics, even as law, accords the latter a definite place in its scheme and sees to it that they are spared unnecessary hard-ship and avoidable cruelty. But Ethics and law must be distinguished from spirituality in any scientific discussion.

The concrete programme of the Congress consists of village work, village industries, labour and Kisan organisation. Khadi, Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, spread of Hindustani and the Parliamentary activity. With the exception of untouchability none of these can be considered non-political, and spiritual. For individuals they may be means of spiritual and moral advancement. But the Congress has accepted them for their political, economic and practical value and utility. Untouchability, as it exists in India to-day, is not a purely religious question. It is political, economic, and above all humanitarian. Without its removal the nation will be divided against itself, and its demand for independence will sound unreal and hollow.

The leadership of the Congress, neither in the past, nor in the present, has laid any claim to spirituality. If, however, devotion to a cause that is not personal, sacrifice and suffering, constitute any claim to spirituality, the leaders have possessed these qualities in an ample measure. Beyond this, all of them with the exception of Gandhiji, were and are hard-headed practical patriots and politicians. Gandhiji, no doubt, is supposed to combine practical politics with spirituality. But nobody has ever suspected that he lacks practical and political ability. Lloyd George once said of him that he is the shrewdest politician going. Sometimes his opponents



have found his politics so intriguing and shrewd that they have charged him with Machiavellian methods. But to friends and impartial observers, he is transparently honest and means what he says, and ever lays his cards on the table.

So neither the aims, methods, programmes or personalities of the Congress lay any particular pretensions to spirituality. How then is it, that this charge is made by well-informed and responsible persons? There are two main causes for this. One is that for a school of socialists, everything that does not square with materialism and socialism, is medieval and therefore spiritual, for the motive force in the middle ages is considered to be primarily spiritual, rather than political. How far this view of the middle ages is correct, and based upon facts may not be discussed here. The second reason that makes for confusion is the use of words and phrases that are old and have some association with spiritual ideas. There is such a thing as the fallacy of words. Thinking and analytical capacity are very often paralysed and go astray by the confusion caused by language. Only with great care can one escape from this. Words like Purna Swaraj, Satyagraha, Ram Raj, Hartal, Village Industries, Khadi, raise in the modern mind ideas that appear medieval and therefore, spiritual. If, in place of these are substituted words like complete independence, non-co-operation, democratic rule, general strike, decentralisation of industry, the same ideas become modern, up-to-date, and purely political and economic. Whether the new words, very often in a foreign tongue, will be understood and appreciated by the masses, is a question which the critics of the Congress do not seem to bother about. India must line up with the language and thought of the West, otherwise there is political isolation and stagnation.



# XIII

## SPIRITUALITY AND POLITICS

( *March, 1937* )

PUBLIC or patriotic service in India is the exception and not the rule. People are used to sacrifice for the family, the caste, and the denomination. When sacrifice becomes customary it loses its significance as sacrifice. It is expected of everybody. Those who refuse are considered unsocial and subnormal. Human beings are ever undergoing innumerable personal inconveniences to live in society but such inconveniences are not termed sacrifices for they have become customary. In India service to the family, the caste and religion are customary, not so service to the nation.

National service involves no more inconvenience than other services, but because in India it is not done, all those who render it are considered superior beings. They undergo not the ordinary but the exceptional inconveniences. India knows only one superiority. A superior person must be a spiritual person. Spirituality whatever it might have meant in the past, to-day in India when it is not formal and ceremonial, means asceticism and mortification of the flesh. Every national worker must, therefore, conform to this standard.

In the west a national worker lives a normal life. He makes large sacrifices and even at times lays down his life, yet nobody assigns to him for all that a spiritual character. He is not expected to live like an anchorite. He lives the ordinary life of a citizen in food, dress and

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other necessities of physical existence. In India it is not enough for a national worker to make large sacrifices in money and comfort, but he must also eschew all ordinary demands of physical nature. What in India specially among the Hindus is not a pleasure of the body! A national worker may not go to a Cinema without public criticism. He may not visit to hotel if he is hungry. He may not smoke, he may not drink tea or coffee. If he is a Mussalman he must not shave. A Hindu national worker may not eat eggs, meat or fish without injuring the feelings of some sensitive souls. He may not enjoy his property. If he has any acquired by his former effort or left to him by his ancestors, approved rules require that he should give it up all. In the case of woman, all ornaments are taboo. The hair must be parted only in the orthodox fashion. In short a patriot must be an ascetic for only such can enter the kingdom of national service. The popular prohibitions go much beyond what the Congress rightly as a national policy has proscribed,—liquor and foreign cloth and generally foreign goods.

When the Khilafat movement was at its height, it was incumbent on a Muslim patriot to cultivate the beard, and the conventional pious cut of the moustache. If his chin was without beard he could not get a hearing. If his lips were clean he could never be a fit servant of the country or the Khilafat. He must not pose for a photo. Often one heard the criticism in the life time of the great patriot, Motilalji, that he had not given up all his property and was yet living a life of comparative ease, comfort and luxury. To-day the same criticism is not rare even against his son, thought for years he has lived behind prison walls. This criticism is not confined to the ignorant and the orthodox. Even the educated indulge in this

thoughtless confusion. Public workers are criticised for a pen, for a watch, for a safety razor, for anything that appears to any of the many orthodoxies, as a new or an impious thing or that is taboo to any of the many old and new puritanic sects.

If a public worker were to conform to the popular and the approved standards, he would be half-naked in dress, half-starved in body, with intellect ill-furnished with the problems, political and economic, facing the world or even India, with aesthetic and artistic sense atrophied, with emotions starved. Such a one would be an ideal patriot. He would be a fit servant in whom the country may well rejoice.

Ask an average Indian to render national service, however humble, his quick reply will be that he has not renounced the world, that he is a family man, that he yet wants to enjoy life. Living the ordinary normal life is considered not to be consistent with national service. A German, a Jap and an Englishman can, when occasion arises, face the cannon; he can and does go direct from the dancing-hall, the cafe and the billiard room to the trenches, but the Indian is considered so soft of character that he will betray his country if he does not keep up to the ascetic standards.

It is no wonder, therefore, that one finds so few, specially among the young, coming forward for national service. When society keeps such unreal, false and high standards it should not be surprised that it is rewarded by an abundant production of pharisees and hypocrites. Earnest people, not being by training, temperament or conviction anchorites, start to engage in national work and find that at every turn they have to make compromises and sometimes they have to pretend. It is always

dangerous for a public man to pretend. He lives before the public eye. Sooner or later what he does is known. The public and his friends are then needlessly shocked. If this were, however, the only mischief done, it would be a cheap price. What is worse, the public soon begins to suspect all of duplicity and loses faith and confidence in political workers. Much of the complaint against national workers is of this character.

Yet another thing. Every public worker in the Congress is supposed to have accepted the lead of Gandhiji in his life. Gandhiji is considered not only the political but also the spiritual Guru of national workers. Tell people that you have accepted only the politics of Gandhiji, they would refuse to take you at your word. You are supposed to observe the whole of his experimental morality. He claims no finality for himself. But the public and some of his admirers claim it for him. If you have promised to remain non-violent in politics you are expected to go further and love all humanity whether your capacity and evolution warrant your being on such high altitudes or not. It is not the law of your being that you have to follow but the law of Gandhiji's being or rather the caricature of it evolved by the public imagination.

The nations of to-day cannot afford to have a caste or class of fighters whether they be soldiers of the sword or of Satyagraha. National work must be done by all—high and low, rich and poor. They must, therefore, all perform the duties of citizens. If they are to do so, no extraordinary standards of conduct must be imposed upon them. Ordinary *gentlemanly* conduct should satisfy the most critical standards. Political life must not be confused with spiritual life. As a matter of fact Politics



can never be made spiritual. Politics is primarily concerned with group activity and external action. Inner motive and individual right judgment have great value but not the preponderating value that they have in spiritual life. Spiritual life, if it is not mere form and ceremony, is primarily concerned with individual and inner life, with the life of motive. Here the individual in his psyche is the most important. The group occupies a secondary place. The inner springs are more important than outward conduct. The evil eye is of the essence even when outward manifestation is wanting. If politics, law and social conduct made the inner springs and motives as their primary concern, public life instead of being purified and elevated would be confused.

Spiritual life if it means anything, means spiritual realization. This can scarcely be the goal of a group or a nation. The disciplines necessary for this realization are various and diverse. Sometimes they are so complicated and conflicting, that if a group dabbled in them for purposes of its collective life, it would be lost in confusion. For instance, it will be a sight to see a whole nation prostrating before an image or sitting in Samadhi or better still standing on its head. All such practices are common among individuals for the control of their emotions and passions to ensure spiritual advancement. The centre of spiritual life is the individual in his psychic life. The primary concern of politics is the group, therefore, necessarily the external social conduct. But even in religion the distinction is made between the Sanyasi who has renounced and all, the householder who lives an ordinary mundane life. The two have not to observe the same vows or to bear the same rigour. Buddha had two orders of disciples, the monastic and the lay disciples.

The rules for the two were not the same. The lay disciples lived the ordinary Grihastha life, while the monastic disciples had to remain Brahmacharis and had to renounce all the ordinary pleasures of the body. This distinction between the spiritual life of the ordinary and the exceptional, is well-recognized in all religions. The householder lives the common life under certain rules and regulations. These are not of a very rigorous kind. Gandhiji too, observes this distinction. He has never kept the rules of his Satyagraha Ashram before the Congress or before those who follow his lead in politics.

As a matter of fact, when Gandhiji talks of spiritualising politics, he only mean making politics moral. Usually the rules of ordinary morality are not observed in the political game. What is sought to be introduced in the politics of India is, that the standard of honourable conduct whether in individual life, or in political life, should be the same. If philosophic accuracy of language were observed, nobody would talk of spiritualising politics, but of bringing ethical rules in this field of human activity from which they have been so conspicuously absent. True, morality forms a major part of spirituality but it is not the whole of it. If this distinction between spirituality and ethics is kept in sight, much of the confusion that exists about the standards of conduct of those engaged in public activity will disappear, and political life will be free from much of its hypocrisy. The nation too will gain from the humble services of the ordinary citizens as is the case in other countries. To-day he is scared away by the etherial heights which, however, are rarely reached, but which make some of the aspirants look ridiculous rather than spiritual.

## XIV

# THE GANDHIAN WAY

( March, 1935 )

I was asked to write on "Gandhism," but I preferred the title, "Gandhi's way of looking at social and political problems," or shortly, "The Gandhian Way." For I believe there is as yet nothing like Gandhism. All "isms" come into existence, not at the initiative of those in whose names they are preached and promulgated, but as the result of limitations imposed upon the original ideas by the followers. Lacking the creative genius, the followers systematise and organise. In so doing they make the original doctrines rigid, inelastic, one-sided and fanatical, depriving them of their original freshness and flexibility, which are the signs of youth. Moreover, Gandhi is no philosopher. He has created no system. He has from the beginning been a practical reformer. As such he deals with, and writes upon, problems as they arise. He is pre-eminently a man of action, and is rightly called a *Karmayogin*. It may not, therefore, be possible to find in his speeches, writings and action any logical or philosophical system. In this he is like the prophets and reformers of old. They too were faced with practical, day-to-day problems. They had a way of solving these, without involving them in rigid systems. The main psychological principal were perhaps laid down but the details were to be filled in by each individual according to his peculiar circumstances and needs. Philosophy, system and rigidity were the work of lesser persons whose outlook on life and breadth of vision were narrow.

Gandhi never claims finality for his opinions. He

styles his activities as search for, or experiments with, truth. These experiments are *being* made. For anybody to take or claim these experiments as the truth would be presumptuous. True, some of his followers, more zealous than wise, claim finality for his opinions; but he himself makes no such claims. He admits mistakes and tries to rectify them. Only for two of his cardinal principles—truth and non-violence—does he claim any sort of infallibility. For the rest he is as willing to learn as he is to teach what he considers to be the truth as he sees it. Even as regards the two cardinal principles, in their application there is no rigidity. He freely admits that they may be applied differently in differing circumstances and situations. It is this attitude of his that often puzzles his followers and others and makes any positive forecast of how he will act under a particular set of circumstances, rather difficult. Being a growing and evolving personality, there can be no finally fixed modes of thought and action for him. Those who have seen him at close quarters have observed this. It often comes out in his changing attitude to things and ideas. The undercurrent and the spirit guiding is the same, but the expression varies. This it is that gives him the freshness of youth and keeps him abreast of the times. While many of his young followers grow static and lose their vitality, he is ever dynamic, active and full of vigour. While others grow impatient of the youthfull waywardness of the younger generation, he is ever understanding and patient, and examines new propositions with an open and comparatively unbiased mind. There is, therefore, as yet no such thing as Gandhism, but only a Gandhian way and outlook, which is neither rigid nor formal nor final. It merely indicates the direction without trying to fill in the details finally or for all time to come.



Gandhi's advent in the social and political field was due to the peculiar circumstances of our country. Like some of his better placed countrymen he went to England, qualified himself for the Bar and began his professional career to earn money and maintain him-self and his family in ease and comfort. He was already a married man. In the course of his professional work he went to South Africa. Circumstances made him cast his lot with his countrymen there and fight their battles. Most of them were poor and illiterate. The few who were rich, were there to make their pile. These lacked public spirit and political initiative. All needed guidance and leadership in a foreign land full of raceprejudice and economic jealousy. They suffered from various social and political disabilities, and were subject to various humiliating restrictions. Gandhi was drawn in the struggle of his countrymen to retain their vanishing rights in the land of their adoption. Once in, he brought to it all the weight of his sincerity, ability and intensity. He put his whole being in the cause and counted no cost. Soon he was the sole leader and guide of the Indians in South Africa. In that struggle he evolved a new strategy to redress group wrongs, and discovered the broad principles of Satyagraha. As usual, the practice of the doctrine came first and the name and the theory afterwards. In the struggle Gandhi discovered that truth and non-violence were not only good conduct in personal and family relations but they were good and efficient weapons in settling inter-group relations. The doctrines were not new in human history. They had been practised and preached by several prophets of old. But no extensive effort had been made to apply them to political relations and disputes. To Gandhi belongs the credit of demonstrating on a large scale that the standards of moral and gentlemanly

conduct that are good in individual relations are also good and efficient in inter-group relations. Also that truth and non-violence can be organised into external effective action making opposition difficult. He discovered that a fighter for a good cause, without indulging in violence, can, if he so chooses, get his wrongs redressed, that in truth and non-violence he has better and more effective weapons against wrong and iniquity than the customary weapons of violence.

Gandhi applied among others a simple test to prove that truth and non-violence are at the basis of all successful activity. While truth does not need for its success the co-operation and support of untruth and violence, these latter in order to succeed always stand in need of the former. For any activity in life, however selfish and unsocial, must have its foundations in the keeping of faith with each other of those who have to engage in it. Commerce, for example, is a field where selfishness and greed have perhaps more free play than elsewhere. Yet in commerce no transaction (or even fraud) would be possible for any length of time if merchants did not keep faith with each other and if their word was not as good as a bond. Thieves and murderers have to keep faith with each other. Sometimes they have to keep this faith by sacrificing their individual advantage. No activity but must use as its basic principle some form, however limited of truth. And so with non-violence. No extensive and organised violence would be possible if those engaged in it did not observe rules of non-violence within their own ranks. They cannot possibly carry on their fight with the enemy without this basic principle. If an army believed merely in violence, then before it could make use of it against the enemy it would annihilate itself.

Realising these two to be the basic principles of all organised life. Gandhi uses them in the field of politics, a field where so far as results go, fraud and violence have ever been thought to be more efficient. Gandhi, however, does not rely merely on the efficacy of the abstract principles, leaving the working of the results in the hands of higher powers. He does not believe merely in the conversion of the heart of the opponent, though he desires that too. But above all he tries to organise and strengthen those suffering from iniquity and injustice. So that they may be properly organised, he wants them to shed all iniquity, all division, all fear, all selfish and petty interests. Having so strengthened and organised themselves, he wants them to withdraw the help that they have been rendering to iniquity and tyranny. In short, he wants them to non-co-operate with the forces of evil.

Whatever may have been the case in the past, in the world as it is to-day, tyranny is made possible by the willing or unwilling, conscious, or unconscious, free or forced, co-operation of those who are tyrannised over. If the latter refused all co-operation and were willing to suffer the consequences of such refusal, iniquity and injustice would find it hard to go on for long. This is seen in industrial disputes. Whenever labour has effectively withdrawn co-operation, the capitalists have invariably capitulated. Seeing the results in single isolated industrial disputes, labour to-day talk of general strikes for the redress of grievances and for political or revolutionary purposes. Now is a strike externally but non-co-operation—Satyagraha ? The inner spirit guiding an industrial dispute is different from that of Satyagraha as conceived by Gandhi, though it need not be, but the method of withdrawal of co-operation is common to

both. If that withdrawal could yield tangible results in industrial disputes, why should there be scepticism about Satyagraha? Satyagraha is a strike plus something more. That something more makes for better morale among those carrying on the fight. It means greater loss of morale to the opponent. It also means greater sympathy from neutrals. The external weapons of withdrawal of co-operation are here helped and strengthened by more psychological and subtle influences. A Satyagrahi is a better non-co-operator or striker. His judgment is not clouded by passion, anger and hatred. He disarms his opponent. He gains more sympathy. He is also fortified with the belief that suffering voluntarily borne always makes for the advancement of the individual. But suppose that all these moral and psychological factors and forces working in his favour are taken away and one confines oneself merely to the external fact of withdrawal of co-operation, what is there mystical about the method, that is being used more or less successfully for the last one hundred and fifty years in industrial disputes and but for which there would be little talk to-day of general strikes, socialism or communism? Satyagraha is something mystic and spiritual only if the term stands for something unknown, unknowable and unpractical. A general strike is something practical, concrete and comprehensible. Why should then Satyagraha be unintelligible? How easy it is for men to get entangled in phrases, words and thus create differences where there are no differences! Talk in the language of Gandhi, and in terms of satyagraha and a concrete, tangible, struggle becomes mystic, spiritual, idealistic and consequently unreal. Talk in terms of general strike and straightway that very same thing becomes scientific, nay, it becomes a historical necessity.



Not only in this matter of Satyagraha does the modern mind miss the essence but also in Gandhi's theory of truth as applied to politics. Truth in intergroup and international relations is to-day considered to be the vital necessity of the world situation. If diplomacy continues to be what it is, there is to-day a very great danger of the whole machinery of modern civilisation falling to pieces. This was clearly understood by Dr. Woodrow Wilson and other very practical politicians in the last war. Now what is truth in politics but what has been called and applauded as open diplomacy? When Dr. Wilson kept this principle before the nations of the world and when he advised the formation of a League of Nations on this principle, nobody thought him to be a mystic, a spiritualist or an unpractical politician. When Russia and Socialism and Communism talk of open diplomacy, the modern mind is not scandalised. Is it because these do not mean the thing seriously? But when Gandhi talks of truth in political relations all the learned and the wise raise their hands in horror and cry, it is not possible, human nature being what it is and politics being what they are and what they always have been. As usual fanaticism fights about words. We have the illustration of this in religion. If the Christian says the Divine Spirit descended in the form of a dove, it is rational. But if the Hindu says that it descended in the higher form of man, it is all oriental superstition. If the Hindu reverences an idol it is again all superstition, but if a book or scripture is wrapped in hundreds of folds and kissed every time that it is touched or opened, it is rational. If one talks of open diplomacy one is a practical politician, if one talks of truth in politics, straightway one becomes mystic, a saint and therefore unpractical as a politician. Talk in terms of general strikes and you are scientific, but talk of

Satyagraha and you at once become unscientific and reactionary.

To continue, Gandhi found and evolved his method of fight and his strategy in South Africa. He used it there with some effect. He has used the same weapon of Satyagraha here on several occasions in Champaran and in the three fights of non-co-operation. He has in all these instances, even when he has not attained his or the national objective, achieved substantial success. Even an armed insurrection does not succeed in the first rush or with one effort. In the prolonged war in defence of a cause there are many battles, skirmishes and sieges, reverses and successes. If a force succeeds in the minor engagements it must consider itself successful and many reasonably hope in course of time to achieve complete victory and reach its objective. Even if there is failure in minor engagements but if the army marches on uninterrupted and its morale remains undiminished and its power of resistance grows and if progressively it is able to give a better and better account of itself, then, even though the objective is not achieved, the method employed must be considered good. Now few can deny that with every struggle that the nation has waged under Gandhi, its progress has been forward, and its power of resistance has increased. Only prejudice can deny that the net result of these Satyagraha fights has been an advancement of the nation in terms of strength, sacrifice, organisation, fearlessness and morale. Each struggle has brought greater hardship and suffering due to increased repression, but every time the response and the resistance has been greater. In 1930, the nation gave a better account of itself than in 1920-21. In 1932-33, the nation gave a still better account of itself. The outward result of the fight did not

appear to be as favourable as in 1930, but the nation had a more prolonged fight and it resisted a greater shock. Repression was more ruthless and more thorough and though the nation had to suspend the fight through sheer weight of the enemy and consequent exhaustion, its inherent strength was much greater than in 1930. This was soon witnessed in the solid victory of the nation at the polls in the Assembly elections. The nation was not prepared to prolong its suffering at the time by persisting in Satyagraha but its heart was sound and its morale intact. So whatever may have been the immediate result of the three fights, a defeat, a truce and a defeat again, the nation has been steadily advancing to its goal. After all the final goal can be reached but once. Even a series of successes may not reach us to the final goal; but whether apparent success or failure, whatever leads us to greater strength must be considered essentially a success, as it brings us nearer to the final goal.

Now let us see if the nation could have so advanced by the pre-Satyagraha methods. Except for those who are wedded to constitutional methods under all conceivable circumstances, every unbiased observer will admit that the method of Satyagraha is a definite improvement upon the method of constitutional agitation, of petition, prayer and protest that marked the Congress politics before the advent of Gandhi. The critics may, however, say that though this method was an advance on the old and though it did take the nation a little farther, its function is now over and its mission complete. It can serve us no more. If so, then it is for such critic to suggest or advise a better and more efficacious method. Has any critic so far kept before us any new method of organised resistance? On the contrary, it is obvious that



all thoughtful people, even those belonging to the so-called advanced groups, believe that under the circumstances in which the world, and particularly India, is placed to-day the method of fight will have to be non-violent. With the present weapons of war and destruction being the monopoly of States and Governments even a firearm is not better than a lathi or bow and arrow of old. In an age of aerial and chemical warfare, the instruments, of which are in the hands of Governments, even an armed people would find a physical conflict with the State a hopeless task. How much more so an unarmed nation like India? Moreover, it is not possible to organise openly in a military sense. We can only organise ourselves by non-violent methods. And after all even in a physical fight the qualities that are of the utmost importance are moral, like organisation, discipline, unity bravery and sacrifice. Satyagraha brings out these qualities pre-eminently. Whatever may give the final blow, non-violence or violence, for the time being the qualities that the nation has been progressively acquiring under Gandhi are worth cultivating and worth having. They can be cultivated most extensively by peaceful methods. It is quite possible to have a small secret revolutionary group having all these moral qualities. But the nation as a whole or any extensive portion thereof cannot get these qualities by secret methods. Therefore even for a final violent struggle these qualities that Satyagraha has developed in Indian character are good, for they are the basis of all fight, violent or non-violent. So if not for ever, at least for many years to come, the method of Satyagraha or strike is the only method open to us. It is not possible nor desirable for the practical reformer to look very far in the future. He goes wrong if he thinks only of to-day. He does wrong again



if he thinks in terms of very remote future. He must strike between the two extremes a workable mean. This workable mean is supplied by our non-violent fight of Satyagraha for Swaraj. So far, therefore, as any revolutionary programme of fight for the capture of political power goes, there is no party that has even remotely suggested any suitable substitute for the method of Satyagraha worked out and evolved by Gandhi.

In a revolutionary fight the actual struggle is as much of importance as periods when struggle is not possible, when owing to political repression or exhaustion the nation is not prepared for the risks and sufferings that actual fight involves. At such time the nation must be provided with some activity of a constructive and useful character. If this not done the fighting ranks will be disorganised. The soldiers of Satyagraha must periodically retire to their camps. These must provide them with activities that would keep them fit and in good trim. Periods of comparative peace must be utilised also to strengthen the organisation. If all this is neglected, at the commencement of the new fight the nation will find itself disorganised and out of form. For such times of political depression and quiet, Gandhi has evolved what he calls his constructive programme. Khadi, Village Industry, Village Work, National Education, Harijan Work, Hindustani Prachar are some of the activities which he has organised and institutionalised. The activities are good in themselves and they keep the army of workers engaged. The nation too, by participating and helping in the activities, learns habits of public work and responsibility. This is not all. When civil disobedience is suspended, local fights with the Government on particular issues go on. Bardoli was one such fight.

These constructive and partial activities also rope in people who either do not believe in direct political action or are more interested in social than political work. Gandhi and his co-workers view these activities both from the social and the political viewpoint. While they are engaged in these activities they never forget that they are the soldiers primarily in the fight for freedom. Therefore to view and style these activities as mere narrow social reform or as 'old dame's work' or reactionary is needlessly to stigmatise them. It is to confuse the issues. All activity that is not of a militant character would, if superficially and unsympathetically viewed, appear as reformatory and not revolutionary. But if the aim and the objective are not forgotten, these very same activities become both reformatory and revolutionary—reformatory in their immediate results and revolutionary in their ultimate effect on the fight whenever that may come. An army when it is not fighting and is in barracks does many things that appear to an untrained mind to have no direct relation with actual war. They dig trenches that have to be filled in again. They organise long marches that lead nowhere. They shoot the bull's eye and their shots kill nobody. They organise mock fights. All these activities, if they are taboo because they do not appear to have any particular relation with actual war, would disorganise the army and would make it useless when the time of actual action approaches. Even revolutionary parties have their day-to-day reformatory programme. They are not solely to be judged by these programmes. If they are, such judgments would not be just. The city proletariat has got to be organised. How can it be done? It can only be done by means of trade unions. Now no trade union, however revolutionary its object might be, can be organised on purely revolutionary

basis. The basis must be the day-to-day needs and requirements of labour. These requirements have no relation to the revolutionary aim. For the time being the activities of labour unions will be concerned with a little reform here and a little reform there. They will be concerned with a little increase in the wages, a little diminution of hours of work and a little increase of social amenities. No trade union can ever be organised solely and purely on revolutionery basis. The peasant organisations will have also to function similarly. For day-to-day work they will be reformatory, while their objective will be revolutionary. To decry all reformatory work as anti-revolutionary and reactionary, is to miss the different facets of a revolutionary movement, which is to be carried on all fronts.

I have not yet seen any group or party that has kept any substitute programmes for those laid down by Gandhi and accepted by the Congress. I have heard a good deal of talk about some radical and revolutionary programmes but I have not seen them illustrated in practice.

Take one item of Gandhi's constructive programme, the production and sale of Khadi. I have not yet heard what advice the revolutionary of the non-Gandhian type would give to the ordinary purchaser. He surely cannot recommend Khadi, as that would be reactionary. Will he then recommend mill cloth? That he cannot do, for he would be asking the consumer to directly help those who daily and hourly exploit labour, while he has not the necessary political power to put a check upon their rapacity and avarice. Will he recommend foreign cloth? Apart from anything else such a recommendation would be psychologically harmful for the immediate political struggle. I have often heard it said that he would all the

same recommend Indian mill cloth in the hope that as industrial life grew, there will be an increase in the number of the city proletariat which is always good material for the revolution. If he could even ensure this, his argument may be allowed to pass. But whatever he may say or do, he cannot extend and energise Indian industry. Thanks to the policy of the foreign Government, Indian industry is never allowed to go beyond certain narrow limits. Census reports show that it has not been able to keep pace with growing population of India and that progressively more and more people have to fall back upon land. The proportion of industrial population to the whole population keeps diminishing.

The other argument advanced is that help to Indian industry gives us something on which we shall build our industrial life hereafter. This argument no more holds good. Russia has shown that after the capture of power a five or ten years' plan can industrialise a country completely. When we have the power, this antiquated and effete industry will render us precious little help in our future plans of industrial reconstruction. So to forego for the poor a sure advantage to-day for a doubtful advantage in the future will not be a wise policy. We may also profit by past experience. The Swadeshi movement of the anti-partition days came to grief because the nation relied upon mill-agents. They raised the price of cloth and defeated the object of the politicians. The politicians relied exclusively upon the goodwill and patriotism of the industrialists. The result was disastrous. If we are to benefit by Swadeshi and if we are not to put ourselves helplessly in the hands of an unpatriotic and shortsighted capitalism, we must have other resources to fall back upon. These have been created by Gandhiji in his



Khadi and Village Industries movements. These movements also provide work for the leisure months of the peasants. In what way then are these activities reactionary? Some radical thinkers say that these activities by ameliorating the lot of the poor and by bettering their condition would take away their revolutionary zeal. If this is true of Khadi, it is true of every trade union activity, including strikes. Even a strike is never undertaken for general revolutionary purposes, but for some concrete reformatory objective. The gymnastic that it provides for revolution is only a by-product.

So far as Khadi and Village Industries go, Gandhi can give ample proof that he is wide awake. Nothing can be more revolutionary than the fixing of a minimum living wage and this without political power. Yet Gandhi introduced this revolutionary measure in all organisations working under his advice and guidance. This he has done in spite of expert advice based upon commercial figures supplied by workers and organisers. He has ignored facts and proved his revolutionary vision and ardour. He had warning that whatever little of Khadi had remained would be annihilated but he preferred the destruction of his pet scheme in favour of a distinctly just and revolutionary principle. His vision and faith have been justified. Khadi has not suffered much by the new experiments.

Take again industrial labour. There is one labour union guided and inspired by his ideas. In India to-day there is no union better organised and more financially stable than the Ahmedabad Mill Mazdoor union. None has more real and paying membership. None has again more institutions attached to it in the shape of creches, day and night schools for children and adults, boarding houses, Harijan institutions, co-operative stores and the like.

Impatient as Gandhi is for Swaraj, he lays out his plans on a vast scale and on permanent basis. Even when he talked in terms of Swaraj in one year he devised and organised his institutions on the basis of prolonged work. National Education, Khadi, Hindustani Prachar, Harijan work could not have been completed in one year. For the schemes and the institutions were conceived in terms of many years. The immediate political objective was not attained but the institutions went on organising and perfecting themselves and thus keeping the embers of revolution alive. These are all pioneer institutions. They may fail, they may have to be scrapped; newer, better and bigger schemes may have to be devised in the future; but the gain to the nation and the advance that the nation has made through these institutions can only be belittled or neglected by a very superficial student of the national movement.

It is easy to denounce and criticise. But when the critics themselves settle down to work and organise they will find that their activities in terms of their worldvision of universal revolution are merely reformatory, concerned with day-to-day minor details that apparently bear no relation to the objective. Take a volunteer in a revolutionary movement who is assigned the task of pasting stamps on office envelopes. How is he to relate his, this humble, humdrum, monotonous task to the coming revolution contemplated by his party? He has to requisition to his aid a broader vision and some living faith. Thus only can he think that even his humble task is a necessary contribution to the revolution. Gandhi has the vision and the faith to understand this underlying principle of all work. Like a religious man who sees his Paramatma in every Atma, Gandhi sees his God of Swaraj in every little reformatory activity that he undertakes or advises others.

to undertake. He may be in the front of the fight shaking the manes of the British lion, he may be perfecting the little Charkha or sweeping the narrow lanes of the little village at Segaon, it is all for him the work for the revolution, work for his dream of Purna Swaraj in which the poor will come to their own. As he works in that faith he infects his followers and co-workers with like faith.

Thus Gandhi has evolved and kept before the nation his double programme, one for active and revolutionary periods when the tempo of political life is on the rise and the other for comparatively peaceful times, when the national life is sluggish and normal. No person or party has devised for these two necessary alternating periods better programmes. True, the programmes are conceived for independence, not for the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship or a peasants' and workers' republic. But his programme of work and even his Swaraj is conceived in terms and in the interest of the masses of India. Speaking at the Round Table Conference, he declared that the goal represented by the Indian National Congress was "complete freedom from alien yoke in every sense of the term, and this for the sake of the dumb millions. Every interest, therefore, that is hostile to these interests, must be revised or must subside if it is not capable of revision."

It is quite possible that the interests of the masses may best be served by only a proletarian dictatorship. But as yet Gandhi does not think that such schemes would best serve the interest of the masses of India. In the meantime it is open to those who advocate a proletarian rule to devise their own double method and not only keep it in theory before the nation but demonstrate it in the working. Before we have such programmes in theory and practice, and more in practice than in theory, we may



well be allowed to remain where we are. Gandhi did not invite people on the mere theory and ideology of truth and non-violence but along with it he kept programmes of work. His ideology may have been centuries ahead of the world-thought, yet he did not wait for the time when his ideology will have permeated through the masses of India. He rather demonstrated the efficacy of his ideology by placing before the nation work conceived in terms of his ideology. He rightly thought that the best way even of preaching an ideology is to work it out in howsoever humble a fashion. Others who have similar ambitions had better follow in his footsteps if they are serious about their particular and peculiar ideologies. After all we were new to Gandhi's ideology and his practice. It required a great wrench with our past, with our habits of thought and action, with our values, to join him. We may be trusted to do likewise if better and more workable programmes are offered to us by any individual or group. After all Gandhi kept poverty and suffering before his followers. If they can get some tangible results with less suffering and less sacrifice they are not such fools as would allow such opportunity to pass by. Some of them have left their professions and their incomes and are engaged in Khadi and Village Industries work. This work gives perhaps a couple of annas to the poor and provides the workers with activity when the actual Satyagraha fight is not going on. If anybody shows them a way of putting a rupee or more in the pockets of the poor and also shows them a surer and better way of fighting the foreign imperialism: they are not the ones who would reject such tempting offers. If they sacrificed what people think important in life—their professions and their incomes—for smaller things, they will not do less if higher and better things are placed before them. They have proved



themselves apt pupils of the novel methods of Gandhi, methods that were never tried in history and for which there was no precedent. If more familiar and well tried and easier methods are placed before them they would surely welcome such. But frankly speaking they do not see their way clear. As soon as they see any light they shall join those other friends from whom they differ now. In the meantime they should be allowed to work out their schemes unhampered. They in their turn are always prepared to allow other groups to work out their own schemes according to their own ideologies.

The question, however, arises: to whom shall the Congress machinery belong? Here also the Gandhian way may be a guide to us. In his Champaran fight he was offered Congress help. He refused it. He said the Congress was a big and important organisation. It could not perform new and untried experiments. It could not risk its reputation for sanity and steadiness on an issue in which it may be involved unconsciously not knowing the full implications and the consequences. Gandhi asked only for moral support and no more. He wanted the Congress to follow its own path in accordance with the genius of its history and growth. In 1920, also he had already started Satyagraha on the Khilafat issue. He came to the Congress with his proposals. He told the Congress that it would be good for the organisation to take up this particular question; but if it chose not to take it up he would go ahead. He did not say that his plans would be put in effect only if they were accepted by the Congress. Once again in the days of the Swaraj Party, even though the vote was with him, he retired and allowed the Swarajists free field. So let all parties keep their plans before the Congress but if these plans are not

accepted they must go and work them out themselves and capture the Congress by the conviction they carry by showing concrete results. These results need not mean any success of the plans but they should be such that they are an earnest of organisation, effort and final success. They should be such that sceptics may be enabled to see a few steps ahead. But if instead of field work in different directions the effort merely is to capture the machinery of the Congress from above, the successful party may soon find that it has killed the golden goose in its hasty anxiety to get as much out of it as is possible. After all Congress is not the Government whose machinery, when captured leads one automatically to power. Congress has no power except what is put in it by us, by our work in the country our organisation, our sacrifices and suffering. Therefore any hasty capture of the Congress machinery from above will not benefit any party. True, the Congress has a mighty prestige but this can only be exploited by those who work, organise and are prepared to suffer and sacrifice, not by anybody else.

I have placed before the reader the double programme of Gandhi, his programme of direct action and his constructive activity. I have also indicated his attitude and his way of looking at the Congress machinery. By all these things we stand. We wait to see better substitutes for all the three methods and when we find them, I hope, following in the footsteps of Gandhi, who is ever willing to learn and is bound by no rigid and inflexible rules, we shall ever be found in the front rank of the fighters for the country's liberty. To that end, we hope, we have dedicated our lives and not to any particular doctrine or dogma.

## BASIC EDUCATION AND GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY

WHENEVER institutions become complex, over-civilised, whenever seeds of corruption enter into them, in short, when there is decadence, what happens is that the first and the primal impulse and reason that gave them birth come to be exhausted. At such times the first things cease to be first and secondary objects engross attention and monopolise interest. Our systems of education, not here alone but all over the world, have suffered from the concrete, the discrete and the real, from what could be seen and sensed. The reformer in every field of activity, in every walk of life, has therefore to call people back to nature, back to the original and primal meaning of things. Take a very simple example of human dress, with which men and especially women decorate themselves today in what is called civilised society. How did dress first originate? It originated owing to the exigencies of the periodical changes in weather, for the protection of the human body. Today among the rich it serves the purpose of decoration, ostentation and fashion. The primal purpose has receded to the background. In food, too, we find a similar change. I am sure that if we were deprived of our clothes and food we would hanker after the coarsest clothes in order to protect our bodies from the vagaries of weather, and the plainest food for the satisfaction of our hunger. The reformer in dress and food would therefore call us back to nature, to the original and primal meaning of things.

In Hindu philosophy it is said that the world is made of *rūpa and nāma*, form and name. Form must come first and the name afterwards. Until and unless there are material objects and human actions there can be no names to designate them. Names and words do not precede but follow things. But in our educational system, we have inverted this natural order and put names and general terms first and objects afterwards. We are taught through words and phrases and general ideas. We have allowed children but a passing acquaintance with things, with concrete nature and its processes. We are not prepared to make them wait upon Nature patiently but are in a hurry to teach by means of words, forgetting that all human knowledge has its basis in the concrete, in observation and experiment.

When Gandhiji first announced his new reform the learned who had acquired their knowledge in the orthodox way by means of words and phrases, were up against the scheme. They could not understand how all that they had painfully acquired through words could be got through the instrumentality of Nature and craft work. I cannot blame the learned for this failure to understand Gandhiji. They have to deal here with a unique and, if I may say so, a queer personality. Gandhiji is so intensely in a hurry for the practical that he forgets to approach a problem through systematic theoretical study and exposition, which alone the educated of today can understand and appreciate. He does not proceed in the manner of the learned; he writes no thesis giving elaborate argument for the proposition he places before the nation. With his gifted imagination he sees his new schemes as in a picture. With the briefest introduction he announces his reforms. We are not invited to witness



the process of his thought. If therefore the learned misunderstood Gandhiji they cannot be much blamed. They fell unconscious victims to the peculiar trick of his genius.

A reformer brought up in the intellectual atmosphere of modern Europe and America, if he had for instance to advocate a new system of education, would have given us a brief history of education, tracing the beginnings of knowledge as it arises in primitive societies. He would have described the developments of all forms of knowledge, scientific, philosophic, political, social, ethical and spiritual. He would then have traced how knowledge, after a particular evolution, becomes rigid, deductive and scholastic; how it comes to be lost in the maze of words and phrases, on account of the influence of the priests and the forms created by the philosophers; then, he would have shown how reformers like Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Herbert, Froebel, John Dewey and others advocated and introduced reforms in the educational system; how and to what extent their movements succeeded and to what extent they failed of their purpose and why they failed; why it was not possible to weave education round a productive craft, and how centralised mass production in factories under the capitalist régime made this impossible. He would also have said something about the politechnisation of education in Soviet Russia. He would have ended by showing how Indian conditions favour the new experiment. He would have shown how the reform advocated was called for by the march of history; how it was inevitable and in consonance with approved scientific theories in education. One must never forget the attachment of the educated to their theories.

Another handicap of the learned is that they suffer from what may be called the fallacy of words. For them certain words have a settled unalterable connotation. If a particular word is used there is no need to look to the reference beyond. For instance, if a person is called a capitalist or a bourgeois, a learned socialist will need no further information before dubbing him a heartless and cruel exploiter. In the same way those who are wedded to the old order, if they hear that a person is a communist, would straightway think of him as a red revolutionary waiting in ambush to destroy the social order. This tyranny of words affected our critics, when they heard that the new system was a brain-wave of Gandhiji's and had emanated from Wardha. No good could ever come from that quarter. Then what were Gandhiji's credentials for invading the field of education? He had never been to a university, foreign or Indian. What did he know about education? All this looked quite conclusive. No effort was therefore made to understand and appreciate the scheme and what it stood for. If, instead of concentrating attention on Gandhiji's personality and his credentials, an effort had been made to understand the scheme there would have been a better appreciation of the new idea and, even if there had been criticism, it would have been better informed, and, therefore, constructive and fruitful.

If the learned, instead of pronouncing judgment *a priori*, had studied the scheme they would have found it natural, scientific and psychological. All knowledge proceeds from observation and experiment; it proceeds from the concrete to the abstract, from the practical to the theoretical. First we have observation and experiment and then the general law based upon induction.

After induction is complete we proceed to deduction, which again is to be verified by actual experience. All knowledge thus proceeds from the practical and must be justified by human experience.

When Gandhiji was thinking of his new scheme he was thinking of this scientific process. He was also thinking in terms of child psychology. The child finds it natural and easy to proceed from the actual and the concrete to the abstract. His tendency to action and not to thought, makes it easy for him to handle the work upon things and thus acquire knowledge. The present system of education runs counter to child psychology. Knowledge is put through the years to be vomitted out through the mouth. I remember the many names which I was made to repeat but which I never understood until years afterwards, when I came in contact with the actual things in life. If instead from the beginning I had been taken to things, and better still had been allowed to handle and fashion things, I am sure I would have learnt quicker and better.

So much about method. If the method is natural and scientific it can suit any system of education whatever its aim. In the history of modern education in Europe and America the labour or craft method has been advocated apart from any general aim that the state or the educator had in view. It has been advocated for an individualist and capitalist society as well as for a socialist or communist society. It has been advocated even by religious organisations. In a sense the method stands apart from any other general aim of education. We may not, however, forget that Gandhiji lighted upon this method in connection with the rest of his philosophy of life for the individual and society. It would not



therefore be out of place to review, however briefly, the philosophy of life Gandhiji advocates. It is the more necessary to do so because, if our education has suffered grievously from a defective and unscientific method, it has suffered much more from defective and unworthy ideals.

I am not caricaturing the aims of the present system when I say it was designed to produce cheap coloured administrative and clerical assistants for the white Government. If there was a worthier aim, it was, in the words of Macaulay, to produce a race of Anglo-Saxons in thought and culture who were Indians only "in the colour of their skins and the blood running in their veins". The latter under certain conceivable circumstances may even be a worthy objective if it could be achieved. The Anglo-Saxon in his own home has many lovable and laudable qualities and if Indians could be turned into coloured Anglo-Saxons there may be some point in the effort. But the object is not possible of accomplishment, as a century of Anglo-Saxon education has demonstrated. The educated Indian has become Anglo-Saxon only in certain not very desirable directions. He has left behind him some of the good qualities of his ancestors and adopted instead some doubtful ways of his masters. There may be honourable exceptions but they are few and far between. However, it was unthinkable that the masses of India could ever be anglicized even in this vulgar sense of the term. The only result has been that the educated Indian has been effectively cut off from the mass of his countrymen and the little knowledge he has painfully acquired through the medium of foreign tongue is confined to himself and never filters down to them. An unbridgeable gulf has been created



between him and them. This gulf would have gone on widening but for the national movement which has tried to bring the classes and the masses together by giving them a common goal to strive for. If therefore it is necessary to change the method in education it is perhaps even more necessary to provide it with worthy and noble ideals.

To understand the philosophy of a reformer like Gandhiji, it is necessary to view it against the historical background. Only so can one fully evaluate and appreciate the changes he proposes to bring about in the present order of things.

The aim of history is to change the natural man into a moral or spiritual man and make him a member of a moral or spiritual society. What is the moral individual? Various definitions may be given from various viewpoints! But few will quarrel with me when I say that a moral or a spiritual person is a free person. He is free not in the sense that he might do any and everything he pleases. That would be the freedom of the Blond Beast. Human freedom cannot be thought of apart from human responsibility. The moral man combines free choice with due restraint, and liberty with responsibility. To attain to this end he must be a member of an appropriate moral society. The march of history has been ever trying to bring about this integrated result.

Humanity began with strife and violence, combined with natural cunning. Life was precarious and uncertain. Humanity somehow moved out of this chaotic condition; it organised itself into families, clans and tribes; later into castes, classes, countries and nations. Some kind of social arrangement with some sort of order and equity was

introduced. War and violence were pushed back a little. Yet these early societies were created through war and violence. Powerful individuals and classes imposed their will and law upon those whom they had subdued and conquered. Every social group was therefore divided between masters and slaves, rulers and ruled, kings and subjects, patricians and plebians, barons and bondmen. If the group was internally divided, externally it was at war with every other group. Yet even this unjust and violent order that repudiated the idea of oneness and equality was an advance on the previous disorder. For the law that might alone is right was partially modified. In such societies the kings were divine with some justification because they had established some sort of order and justice in a section of humanity. This was a moral gain. For we must remember that any kind of order that makes some kind of civilised life possible is better than no order, better than chaos, unless disorder and chaos are temporary or the necessary price to be paid for a better and higher order.

However, this society could not satisfy the urge for fraternity, equality and justice in individuals of exceptional moral and spiritual sensitiveness. They felt within themselves the call for a higher order of goodness, justice and love. How were their aspirations to identify themselves with all human life to be fulfilled? A society that was divided between masters and slaves could not satisfy this inner need. When, therefore, the urge came on them, they renounced life and stood far from the madding crowd and ploughed their lonely furrow to realise their ideals. They became introverts and left the world with all its concerns. Thus it was that Buddha renounced the world. Thus it was that Christ, despairing of establishing

God's kingdom on earth, was constrained to declare that his kingdom was not of this world but of the other world. When these reformers preached their faith they preached it to individuals for their individual emancipation and salvation. Buddha, when he attained the light, said that he would like to be born again and again, so long as there was even one soul left who had not attained salvation. He could think of humanity only as a collection of separate individuals. He had no ambition to change the face of things here and now.

The example and precept of the masters did affect social relations but to a very slight degree and that indirectly. For the rest there was a cleavage between the religious life on the one hand and the material and social life on the other. The best spirits had to renounce the world and its concerns as so much *maya* or the weariness of the flesh. Buddha preached his non-violence to kings and princes, but for their individual life and salvation. The Christian church exempted political leaders and organisers from the full obligation of the law of universal love and charity as preached by the master. The most non-violent sect of the Jains freed kings and princes from the full implications of the doctrine of Ahimsa; but to none of these kings and rulers was individual salvation denied. Thus society that was divided between masters and slaves came to be further divided between those who followed the way of the world and those who renounced the world and followed the way of the Lord. Only thus could the latter attain to the freedom, equality and love whose possibility was denied in external organised society and its relations. Though they failed to mould social, political and economic relations after their hearts, they proved beyond all doubt the moral worth of the individual and his freedom.



from external cramping circumstances. They stood as high peaks on the plane dead level of life. This too was a great gain for humanity.

The tyranny and injustice in organised society, however went on apace, till the average man roused himself from the age-long slumbers and asserted himself against his masters. This struggle established what is known as democracy. Democracy asserts the moral worth of the individual in society and stresses his equality. It also puts an end, at least in theory, to the political exploitation of the individual. Democracy ends violence inside a group. Matters are decided not by cutting heads but by counting them. Each head stands for one. Democracy also provides for alternate rule and obedience. It makes for liberty informed with responsibility. Thus democracy is a moral and spiritual principle on the material and political plane. May it not be therefore that even the wage slaves of democratic countries, "who have only their chains to lose," refuse to accept the totalitarian communist order as a solvent of their difficulties? They have with pain and travail attained to political equality which guarantees them their dignity as individuals. They are loth to risk their new-found freedom by a revolution whose fruits and rewards are uncertain.

If the new-found democratic principle in the politics of the nations had been allowed free scope to develop itself, it might have saved nations from internal conflicts and helped to establish in course of time an integrated and unified social order. It might have progressively moralised society. In such a society, it may not have been necessary to seek the forest or the walls of a monastery for one's highest fulfilment as an individual. But society's progress is never in a straight line. The path is zigzag.



There is advance and regress. Even as humanity discovered democracy, it came by the discovery of steam, electricity and other forces of nature. These, with the discovery of new lands, ushered in the industrial revolution and the modern empire. It will be a long story to recount the changes brought on by these new forces. They are not complete even today. Whatever good the industrial revolution did, there is no doubt that it very nearly destroyed the gains of democracy. It produced the old divisions and inequalities on a different plane—the economic plane. It divided society into haves and have-nots, masters of the machine and the wage-slaves; the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In such a society the democratic vote that asserts the dignity of man became a sham and a mockery. We had therefore again the old contradictions but now removed from the political to the economic field. As political power formerly ensured economic competence, now economic powers ensured political power. There was again the same spectacle of moral man in immoral society.

Some other principle besides democracy was to be introduced if humanity was to be saved. The new need was economic. Therefore the principle of economic equality was discovered and we had the cult of socialism. Socialism proclaims the equality of man in the economic field. As such it is a moral and a spiritual principle. But in asserting it, its advocates pronounced it as merely a material principle and possible only in a society where all moral and spiritual values were abolished. They pitched the new principle against that of democracy. Modern socialism born in the age of science and mechanised and centralised big industry could not divest itself of its swaddling clothes. Its advocates confused capitalism with

democracy, forgetting all the while that capitalism had done the greatest injury to the democratic principle by abolishing the free and responsible individual. The new principle was asserted at the expense of the old gain of humanity. Also capitalism with all its attendant evils was confused with the principle of the freedom of the individual. Therefore the remedy discovered was not only to abolish the ill-regulated and chaotic individuality but individuality itself. For the Marxist the individual is but the ensemble of social relations. The remedy proposed is worse than the disease. It abolishes the patient along with the malady. Of course, it was not easy to justify theoretically this abolition of the individual. We were therefore promised a resurrection of the individual, after the advent of the Marxian revolution. Those who had ceased to believe in spiritual resurrection assured us of the same, on the material plane.

We see the new principle of Socialism at work in Russia, which has established some sort of equality in the economic sphere. But economic equality has been heavily paid for by the curtailment of individual initiative and liberty. Naturally, because for the new creed the individual apart from society does not exist. In this, as in many other things, communism and fascism are at one with each other. The latter thinks of the individual as a cell in the national or racial body politic; the former thinks of him as a cell in a collective world proletariat. Till the world proletariat gets united and comes to its own the individual in Russia is as much a cell in the body politic of Russia as the individual in Germany or Italy. The individual, both in the fascist and communist countries, is free even as a cell in the human body is free, to work out the will of the superior organisation. He can have no life or will of his own.

The Bolshevic equality in the economic field is built upon big, centralised and mechanised industry and agriculture. This centralisation naturally affects the political culture. This centralisation naturally affects the political field also. The result is bureaucratic rule. The holders of power may not directly enjoy undue economic advantages (and that is so in Italy and Germany too), but then office gives them advantages which have their economic value. Apart from this there is nothing to check the pride of power. External checks are no doubt important but they cannot go far enough, to the root of things in the egoistic self-regard of man. Certain positions in the body politic would always be more important than others. If we take away the moral compulsion, there is nothing to prevent the pride and therefore the tyranny of power and position. The earlier monarchies, aristocracies and dictatorships operated within certain narrow limits, and left spheres of autonomous action untouched by authority. Such spheres of autonomy are effectively annihilated under communism, as we know it. So the position in this respect is much worse than under democracies.

The much-talked-of local self-government in Russia exists more in theory than in practice. When all industry, commerce and agriculture, when the whole life of society is organised on a national scale, the local units can have but little voice in the shaping of the new order; local units would naturally lack the necessary information and skill. All this was more than plain in the process of the liquidation of the kulaks. The proof of political liberty is in the treatment meted out to the authors of the revolution under the Stalin regime. The present foreign policy of Russia conclusively illustrates the part that local units play in the moulding of high state politics. In international politics Russian diplomacy has proved



itself as tortuous as the diplomacy of capitalist and fascist countries. The principle of open diplomacy, as every other principle which we were assured would usher in the millenium, has gone by the board. Yet all these things stand justified for the faithful. The result is nothing to be wondered at when one remembers that moral considerations have no relevance in the solution of the problems communism has placed before itself.

Modern democracy came in simultaneously with the advance of scientific research. The latter pushed aside moral and spiritual considerations. Democracy under such circumstances became a mere organisational political device. The freedom of the individual divested of moral responsibility introduced a chaotic element. The confusion thus created was worse confounded with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. The only nexus binding free men was the nexus of the legal contract. If this legal contract sent the weakest to the wall, it was all the triumph of the scientific principle of the survival of the fittest. If people had only their self-interest at heart the resultant self-interest will, by some kind of alchemy, turn into altruism. Instead of man being the full warm-blooded individual that he is, he became an economic man. Marxism turned him into an ensemble of social relations.

Only recently when the principle of democracy was felt to be in great danger, its advocates have dimly begun to realise that it is not merely a political device but a great moral and spiritual principle. It is now felt that the abandonment of this principle would spell regress for humanity. It is also being realised that not only the democratic but the socialist principle is a moral principle. Both are meant to assert the dignity of man on the material plane. If these principles are not to remain



mere forms without content, they must be established in the social, political and the economic fields.

It is this that Gandhiji proposes to do by his philosophy of life. He believes in the moral origin and destiny of man. This destiny has got to be worked out by the average man and woman in a moral society. The individual and the social, the inner and the external life, must be informed and guided by principles of non-violence, truth and justice. That this may be so, it is necessary that in social, political and economic relations, the means must be as pure as the ends. If it does not benefit a man to lose his soul to gain the whole world, it does not likewise benefit a nation to gain the whole world and lose its soul. Moral society must have its appropriate external, social, political and economic institutions. In the arrangements of these, Gandhiji's effort is to retain for humanity the moral and material gains of democracy and socialism. Socialism of the Marxian type by its over-centralisation and the divorce of moral principles from its means and ends, crushes the individual, however effectively it may supply him with material goods. Physically starving humanity may not care for moral ends and may for some time be satisfied with two square meals a day. But neither individuals nor society can live for long by bread alone. They must have other and higher aims without being deprived of the physical means of well-being.

Gandhiji's advocacy of cottage and village industry, along with decentralised agriculture and commerce, is to cure the excess of centralisation of the communist order. For him, therefore, the principle of decentralisation is a moral principle. It makes for free choice in a variety of fields. It also makes possible the exercise of the individual's will over an extended area. It creates external

possibilities for the formation and expression of free opinion. Gandhiji refuses to be tricked by the rosy socialistic picture of plenty of material goods equally divided. Such plenty would not compensate for the moral loss involved in the loss of individuality. Gandhiji is too practical to deny absolutely the need of some centralised industry for the requirement of modern civilisation. Yet he is too moral and humanitarian to allow the machine to swallow up the free individual. Whenever it is necessary to have centralised production it must be in the hands and under the control of the community.

Political life, internal and international, must be guided by truth and non-violence. There must be no secret diplomacy and armaments. Holders of political power must be servants of their people. Their economic life must be in keeping with the average standards of comfort prevalent in the nation. No work or profession must be considered high or low, provided it serves the social end for which it is intended. Every worker, however humble, is not only worthy of his wage but also of honour.

Thus it is, in brief, that Gandhiji proposes to spiritualise politics and economics and appropriate for humanity the great moral principles of justice and equality underlying political democracy and economic socialism. All his practical programmes are directed towards the concrete aim of providing the moral man with a moral society. His philosophy of life for the individual and for society gathers up in one sweeping whole the moral, material and organisational gains of political democracy and economic socialism. It thus sums up the different trends of modern human history. It works for a new non-violent revolution and ushers in a fresh epoch in history.

It is to educate the individual and society in the light of the principles of this new revolution that he has suggested his new scheme of education. He has given us both a natural and scientific method in education and provided it with worthy and noble aims for the individual and for society. It is in this light that his scheme of education must be judged.

